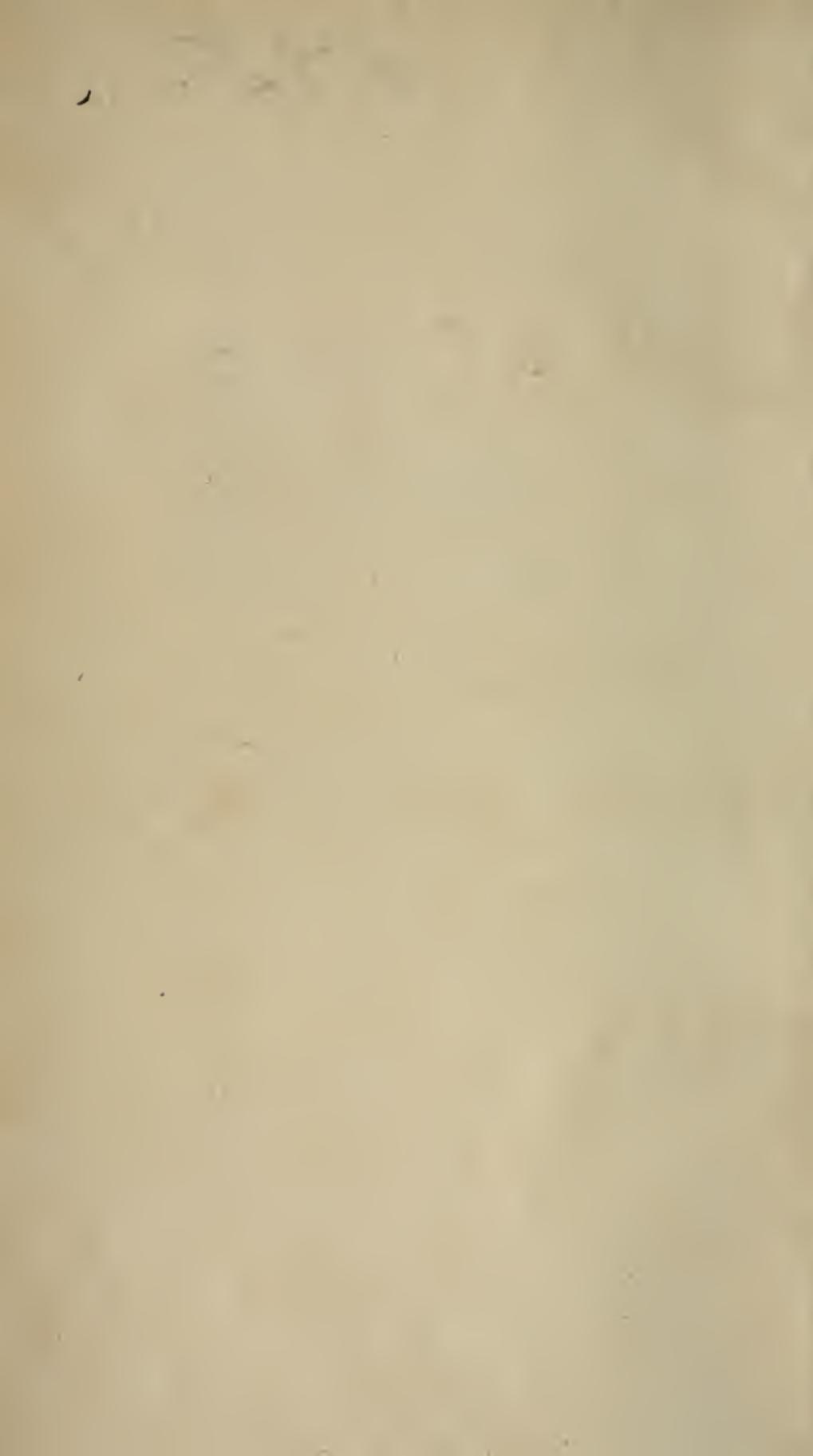




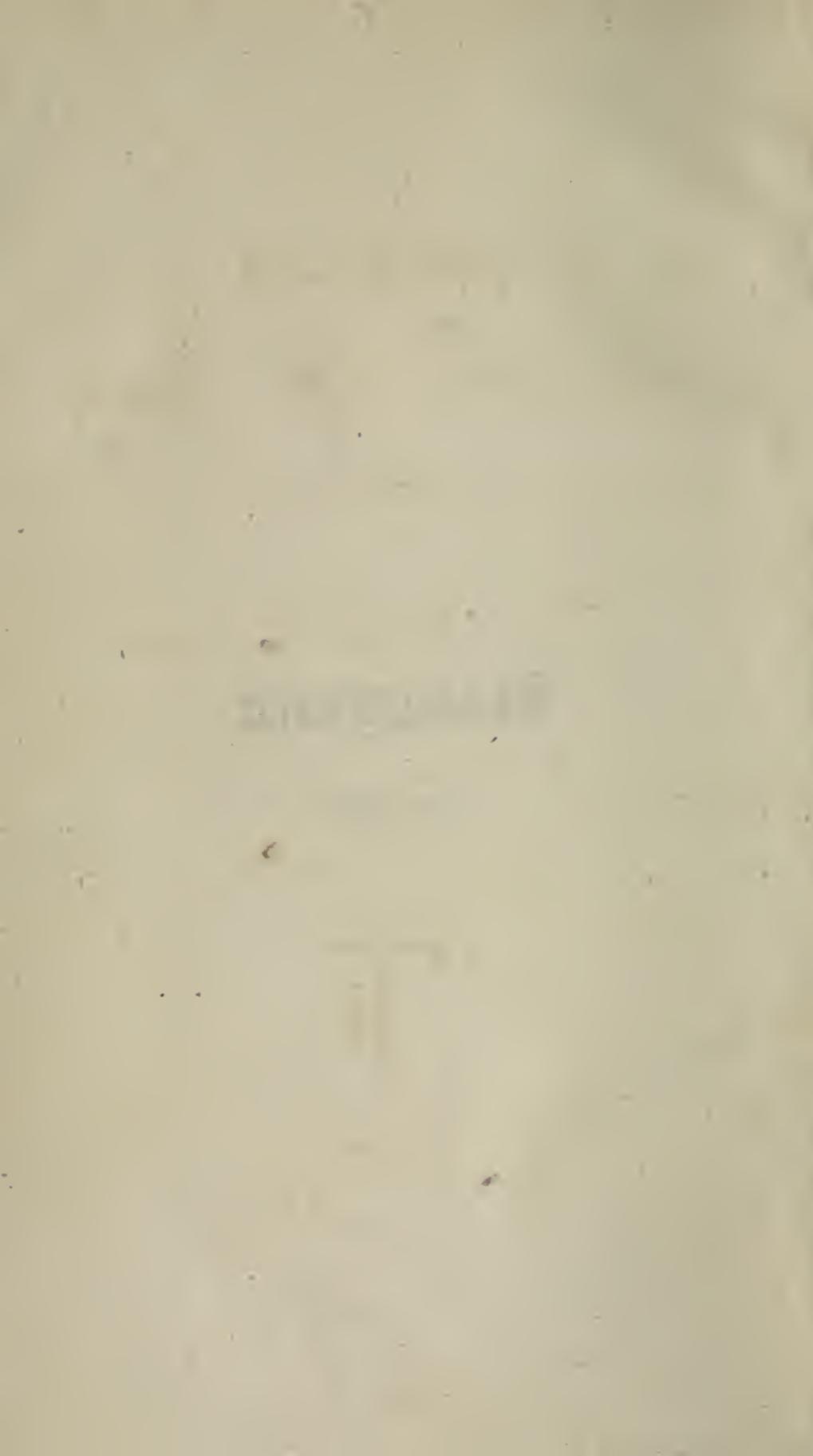


A. D. F.



Rosamund,

&c. &c.



Rosamund,

COUNTESS OF CLARENSTEIN.

I see what you are ; you are too proud,
But if you were the Devil, you are fair.

Twelfth Night, or What you Will.

Tu legasti il Cor mio con mille nodi,
Tu'l formasti di nuovo ; e poi che fui
Gentil fatto per te,—rompesti i Lacci.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE life which the Duke of Rhonberg led in Vienna, was a life of movement, gaiety and pleasure. He had a decided taste for magnificence and all the graceful amenities of life, and his house was the rendezvous of all the polite and well-informed persons of Vienna. There was to be seen the rare union of a life of pleasure, and a life adorned by every amiable virtue. The Duke's fortunes were immense,

and he made a true and noble use of his riches in procuring society at once gay and refined; drawing around him all the elegant arts which embellish it, and so happily blending splendor with order, and pleasure with decorum, that it would be difficult to form an idea of the *savoir vivre* more accordant to good taste, good sense, and true nobility of feeling.

The finest music, and the most animated conversations, constituted the pleasure of those evenings which the Duchess spent at home. In her circle were to be seen manners which united all the polish of aristocratic breeding, all the fascination of high-bred grace, and all the ease and facility of habitual intercourse, sufficiently artificial to remove from view all coarseness, all the minute details and cares of domestic life, yet retain-

ing so much of the genuine unsophisticated expression of sentiment as not to banish what is original in character: for one of the most disastrous effects of artificial manners is not only ‘qu’elles nous enseignent l’art de se passer des vertus qu’ elles imitent,’ but also that they frequently cramp the expression of natural genius, and confound those nice shades of character which, when mixed and contrasted together, produce on the mind that charm, which the eye receives from a well-ordered parterre, where each flower preserving its own peculiar shape and color, all combine to form one beauteous whole.

When thus the politeness of the heart, which is the true politeness, is embellished by the graces with which habitual good taste imperceptibly adorns the manners, when the mind is refined and

softened, without being enervated, by seeing perpetually before it objects of beauty and distinction; when to give pleasure as well as to receive it, perpetually influences the conduct; when all the little selfish passions are kept from view, then grandeur may be pronounced to be little less than enchantment.

As the Hôtel de Rhonberg was spacious, and one pavilion of it which looked into the gardens was entirely unoccupied, the Count Mansfeldt yielded to the courteous entreaty of the Duke and Duchess, to reside under the same roof with themselves. It was therefore thus arranged, and the Count was established as a part of the family.

The morning after their arrival at Vienna, the Count went into the Duke's Library, and found

him preparing to go out. ‘I came,’ said he, in a tone of vexation, ‘to tell you that I must be obliged to dine at the Minister’s to-day.’

‘Well,’ answered the Duke, ‘Is there any thing distressing in that?’

‘It will be eight o’clock before I can get away, and the Duchess perhaps is going out this evening. ’Tis worse than a campaign, if I am to go through all these fatiguing dinners.’

‘Do tell me, my good Lord, what makes you look as if you wished the Minister and his dinner at the Deuce?’

‘Why don’t you understand, Rhonberg, that if I dine at the Minister’s, I cannot dine at home, and consequently I shall not see . . . ’

‘ Rosamund, I suppose you mean:—no, certainly you will not; unless you will take her along with you to the Minister’s. I dare say, that he will be very glad to see her as Countess of Mansfeldt.’

‘ Countess of Mansfeldt,’ exclaimed the Count: ‘ Rhonberg, what an image you have conjured up in my thoughts . . . but not to see the Countess of Mansfeldt the whole day, ’tis distraction.’

‘ As to the Countess of Mansfeldt, my good friend, I believe that you must wait many days before you see her . . . but if it will be any solace to you to see the Countess of Clarenstein in the mean while, that I can do for you.’

‘ Duke, you are the best friend that I have—do let me see her—the Minister too will gain by it—it will make all the difference in the world in my humor—but is she up ; is she alone ?’

‘ No, my dear Mansfeldt—I did not promise that . . . if you see her, it will probably be in a crowd. Come with me to Hermione’s apartments. I always go for five minutes to her lever before I go out—I will take you with me, and afterwards you will find your own right of admission. I dare say, that Hermione will admit your august melancholy, if you find her circle to your taste ; and if you do not, you must be more difficult to please than her husband ; for if it were not for the fear of being joué sur le théâtre en caractère du Mari amoureux, I could spend the morning there myself with pleasure : these apartments were fitted up

under my direction for her, and I will say to you, that Hermione has known how to preserve over me the ideal empire of a Mistress, with all the chaste perfections of a wife : a talent which, either from nature or address, she possesses more than any woman, that I ever knew. I may say of her, as the Emperor says of Berenice :

Depuis cinq ans entiers, chaque jour je la vois,
Et crois toujours la voir pour la première fois.'

As the Duke finished, he entered the Anti-chamber, and inquiring of the attendants, if the Duchess were alone, he was answered in the negative. Agreeably to the foreign fashion, the Duchess was accustomed to receive visits in her own apartments. *Les matinées de la Duchesse de Rhonberg* were as celebrated, as in France

would have been les soirées of a reigning favorite. Suffer me, gentle reader, to place before your eyes the scene where this court was held. It consisted of a suite of three chambers, separated from one another by light arches, formed by columns of the purest marble, on which were hung draperies of pale green satin. The middle chamber, which was her dressing-room, was lofty and spacious, and furnished with such delicacy and magnificence, that every country in Europe seemed to have been searched for its decoration. Here was collected every piece of costly furniture that was suited to a woman's use, and fancy. Yet so judiciously was it arranged throughout, that good taste was not hurt by the profusion. On entering it, you felt a delightful genial climate. A soft and subdued light came on the sight through casements of the most beautiful painted

glass, whose colors, reflected by the sun, cast a thousand gay and fantastic shades through the chamber. The walls were hung with satin curtains, which in different parts were so disposed as partially to discover pictures, whose subjects were calculated either to inspire gay or touching ideas. At the bottom of the room, raised on an estrade, stood a superb groupe of statues in white marble, representing Venus attired by the Graces, as large as life, and exquisitely wrought. The figure of the Goddess had all the beauty ascribed to her by Poets, and in addition, all the delicacy and reserve of that beauty, which is not in general, one of the attributes they give to the mother of love. One of the graces stood by the goddess, and presented her with the charmed cestus.

Another was behind her, braiding her crisped hair ; and Modesty, the most charming of the sisters, was represented drawing a veil over the shoulders of the goddess. Two Cupids sat at her feet ; one of whom was bracing on her light sandals. The other from a heap of flowers was selecting some to form a coronet. The head of the Goddess had that character of beauty which distinguished the Duchess, and was a striking likeness of her. Before the statue stood a tripod, from which a stream of perfume perpetually rose, and filled all the air with its sweetness.

At the opposite end of the room, beside the drapery which hung on the columns, a curtain of lawn, white as snow, was stretched the whole length of the division, and sufficiently transparent to allow only dimly to be seen in the distance, be-

neath an alcove, a magnificent couch, at the foot and head of which were tripods of carved ivory, bearing lights. In a word, throughout the whole of this enchanted bower, there reigned that species of taste, which seeks from concealment to enhance delight, and it seemed as if he who had formed it had ever in his mind the beautiful sentiment of Tasso.

Deh, mira (egli cantò) spuntar la rosa
Dal verde suo, modesta e verginella;
Che mezzo aperta ancora e mezzo ascosa,
Quanto si mostra men, tanto è più bella.

In a word, it was just such a chamber as it befitted a youthful and adored bride to inhabit.

A beautiful toilette, covered with massy gold dressing-plate, stood before a small ivory sofa.

On the toilette was spread a profusion of those costly trifles which please the fancy, and a porcelain vase filled with gay flowers ; a golden cage in which was a gaudy perroquet, stood at the end of the sofa.

But fairer than all that surrounded her, was the Duchess herself, seated on the sofa in a rich deshabille, composed of the finest muslin. Her beautiful face was half shaded by Brussels lace, confined by ribbons on her small and delicate head. Her graceful hands were employed in weaving with threads of gold, one of those fillets worn by Lady Clarenstein. Her two boys were in the chamber; one was on the floor, looking over a book of prints, and the sweet Eugene was standing at her knee, playing with a box of his mother's jewels, which with infantine delight he

often, in order to solicit her attention, held up to her; and how often did the tender Hermione break off her own discourse to answer his childish questions, or imprint soft kisses on his sweet blue eyes, the mimic picture of her own !

At a little distance, near her, the peerless sister of the Duke sat ; and by her side there was a table, on which stood one of those beautiful déjeunés which are made for a lady's dressing-room, from which she served the Duchess and herself with their coffee. The fair Clarenstein was gaily conversing with a groupe of Cavaliers, who in elegant idleness were entertaining the Duchess and herself with all that their wit could furnish for their entertainment. The young Countess, agreeably to her virgin character, was dressed with less apparent negligence than the

Duchess. High health, and youth fresh as that of Hebe, animated her light and springing figure. She looked as if she had awaken with smiles on her lips, and laughter in her eye, as if the present hour was happiness, and the future prospect bright, soft, and clear.

Such was the scene into which the Duke led Lord Mansfeldt. At sight of their father, the boys ran up to him : he clasped them in his arms, and fondly embraced them. Then Eugene seized hold of the Count's arm, and cried out loud enough for the whole circle to hear, 'Come here, come here, to dear Lady Othamund.'

The Countess blushed a little. The gentlemen looked at one another. Lord Mansfeldt drew a chair near Lady Rosamund, took Eugene

on his knee, and to stop his tongue, caressed him. ‘ Eugene has been inquiring for you all the morning,’ said the Countess.

‘ Oh yes!’ cried the boy, ‘ we have wanted you all the day. Why don’t you come and eat your breakfast with her as you used to do at Omberg, and walk with us too?’

The Duke laughed a little at the naïveté of his son, and the young Countess laughed too, but with some embarrassment.

Now it was her intention, as the first step to her intended vengeance on the Count, to present him to the whole Court as her acknowledged lover, and destined husband. Therefore she was not sorry to perceive that the childish ingenuous-

ness of Eugene had already raised in the company present, a dawning suspicion which her own manner confirmed. Whenever she spoke to him, it was with that softened tone of half-tender, half-commanding expression, that is never used but to a favored lover: and this was still more heightened by the ease and confidence with which the Count seemed to take possession, as if by right established, of the place next her. His frequently calling her, Contessa mia, and still more when the Duke, who was going, came up and said, ‘Mansfeldt, do you chuse to go with me?’

Lady Clarenstein answered for him, by saying to the Count, ‘No, you will stay, my Lord?’

‘ You have my answer, Duke,’ said Lord Mansfeldt—

‘ Very clearly announced,’ replied the Duke archly. ‘ Hermione, have you any commands to the Countess Brumaire; I think I shall call upon the Count before I return.’

‘ None, my Lord, except that you do return. Do not let the Countess make you dine with her.’

‘ Nay, I cannot say what may chance to be, if she ask me. It is a thing of course that she is not to be resisted, command what she will. I never in my life could refuse any thing to a woman of her shape and fashion.’

‘ C'est à dire que mon seigneur s'ennuie fort de sa maison.’

‘ That is your assertion. If I am affected by that disorder, who shall escape? If,’ continued the Duke, fixing his eye on the Duchess, ‘ if gaiety, without one grain of folly, if good sense, without dullness, if fine talents, without one shade of vanity or pretension, cannot preserve a man from ennui in his own house, nothing can, and ennui is incurable.’

The Duchess looked down, and smiled. She felt that sweetest of all incense, a husband’s praise, on her heart.

‘ Another time,’ said the Duke, ‘ do not be so ready to accuse me. You had better beware of attacking me, for, as you perceive, I can silence you effectually.’ So saying, the Duke made a passing bow, and left the room.

Such was the society in which Lord Mansfeldt spent two hours every morning. By every graceful and delicate art of insinuation, Lady Clarenstein contrived in these morning circles, and in those more public of the evening, to establish in the whole city of Vienna, the idea that Count Mansfeldt was the man whom her virgin heart selected for its lord. She so artfully combined in her manner profound respect with the most bewitching sweetness, that the Count, in spite of the noble simplicity of his soul, could not but exult at having thus carried off the prize of so exquisite and matchless a lady ; and proud of being known as her destined husband, intoxicated with her favor, and breathing Clarenstein in every vein, the Count thought himself the most blessed of men. To this point of happiness and security did she wish to bring him, and having done

it, now, strong in her resentment, and fixed in her resolution to revenge what she esteemed to be an outrage on the high-spirited privileges of her sex, she resolved to commence that plan which afterwards she so dearly rued.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

Now, as the favor in which the Count appeared to be established with the Countess of Clarenstein had in some measure checked the assiduities of other suitors, the wily Lady resolved to bring them back, and soon Lord Mansfeldt saw with astonishment the wondrous power that she possessed to do it.

‘ Usa ogni arte la donna onde sia colto
Nella sua rete alcun novello amante;
Ne con tutti, ne sempre un stesso volto
Serba; ma cangia a tempo, atti e sembiante.’

With displeasure he saw the profanation of those matchless graces which had won his soul away. He saw them all employed to draw around her a crowd of pretenders, with each of whom she had a different manner of proceeding, according to their separate characters. The timid she encouraged, the bold she repressed, flattered the vain, and soothed the humble. This change of conduct, so abrupt and sudden, after the ingenuous and noble manner in which she had received his vows, so perplexed him that he knew not what to think. For many days he found it impossible to gain her ear; nay, it was equally

difficult to approach her, so besieged was she evermore by a crowd of suitors, and when he did succeed, she smiled on him in the most gracious manner, appeared not to be herself aware that she neglected him, yet neither did she show him any distinction that a hundred others did not share equally with himself. The enamored and noble lover found himself confounded in the crowd, —this he ill brooked, yet having no marked neglect to produce against her, he knew not well on what to found a complaint. This was what the artful Rosamund intended; to alarm and perplex, and yet not give him the right to reproach her; or if he did reproach her, to cast on him the odium of having first broken the good intelligence which subsisted between them. And to this at length she brought him: for the Count, wounded and distressed, took occasion gently to

remonstrate, and as gently the Countess received these remonstrances. ‘ What is it you would have, my Lord?’ said she; ‘ you possess my heart, and cannot therefore give any importance to these trifles.’

‘ Alas, these trifles, as you call them, are more precious to me than you imagine. If I possess your heart, it is almost a negative possession. Your smiles, your words, your presence, these are given to all but me. You are eternally surrounded by a crowd of persons, every one of whom steals something of what by right is mine. I am indifferent to you.’

‘ Do you think so?’ said Lady Clarenstein, with tears in her eyes, and an air of the most be-

witching softness, ‘ Ungrateful!—but tell me, then, what you would have me do, and it shall be done.’

This sweet humility utterly disarmed the Count, and it was no longer possible for him to pronounce another ungentle word. He was ready to accuse himself of severity ; and, softened into tenderness, he besought her excuse for the representation which he had made to her.

She affected to feel deeply this first dissension that had taken place between them ; shed a few tears, and all the remainder of that day endeavored, by the most affecting and marked attentions, to do away from his mind all doubt of being beloved by her. Thus was her first essay a coup-de-maitre, for the Count, touched to the soul by

her sweet condescensions, thought himself harsh and unkind, and was more enslaved than ever.

But this impression was as transient as it was grateful to his feelings. He saw that not only she maintained precisely the same conduct as before, but also that the Prince di Bronti became every day more particularly distinguished by her. Not only was he ever in waiting by her side in public, but was also admitted as one of the cercle choisi, in the Duchess's morning levers; and the greater part of the time was spent in repetitions des scènes de l'opéra, in which the Prince was ever a performer.

One morning that the Count entered the apartment, he saw the Prince and Lady Clarenstein turning over the music of a new opera which the

first singer had just brought to the Countess for her inspection, and solicited her protection of his coup d'essai in composition.———The Countess on General Mansfeldt's entrance, just lifted up her eyes, and said carelessly, ‘ah, General, how are you?’ and resumed her employment, without waiting for an answer; all the time speaking in Italian to the Prince and Signor Caffarelli. At length the Prince said, ‘let us then, beautiful Countess, try together this duet which will suit to perfection your voice and mine. Caffarelli, you will accompany us?’ The Signor bowed, and Lady Clarenstein assenting, they all three went into the music-room, which joined the chamber of the Duchess, and although they made sweet music, yet it was discordance to the ear of the Count. He cast a look full of

anxiety on the Duchess, who said to him in a low voice,

‘ I do assure you, my Lord, that the Prince is not here with my consent.’

‘ By whose then, dear Lady ?’

‘ By Rosamund’s own request to me.’

‘ By her own request ?’

‘ Yes : but I would not have that disturb you.’

‘ Indeed ! it does, however, disturb me.’

‘ I think that ’tis only for the sake of his voice. You know that we all in some measure are devoted to music.’

‘ Yes, my dear Duchess ; but I do not see that for the love of music you sacrifice the smallest point of propriety. I like it not.’

‘ Take no notice, however, of it.’

‘ None, dear lady, but by my absence. I cannot stay to be a personage ~~mute~~^{Muet}, in this comedy, on which unhappily all my peace depends. Complaisance beyond a certain point would be a meanness—timidity at which my nature revolts. ——So saying, he retired. Scarcely was he gone, when the Countess returned. She said carelessly, ‘ Is the Count gone ?’

‘Yes,’ replied the Duchess, gravely. Lady Rosamund looked at the Prince, and they both smiled.

‘I think,’ said the Prince insolently, ‘that Monsieur le Général loves not music! It has always the effect of driving him out of the room.’

The Duchess made no reply, but soon after, being alone with Rosamund, she, with great sweetness, represented to her that the Count was distressed at the assiduities of the Prince di Bronti.

‘So I perceive,’ she replied; ‘but it seems to me that the Count has the habit of being displeased with something or other. I will not allow any one to dictate to me, whom I shall select for

my society. If he is morose and ill humored, he does well to retire.

‘ Dear Sister,’ said the Duchess, ‘ can you think it right to vex the noblest nature in the world by a coquetry, which means nothing ? I know this, but so the Count does not consider it.’

‘ Nonsense, Hermione— : he may construe it as best pleases him. I will have no preceptors.’

The Duchess made no reply. The tone in which Lady Rosamund had answered her, was not with her usual amenity ; and she wisely forbore to speak farther on the subject, and abruptly changed it. Lady Rosamund, believing that the Duchess was a party concerned in the league

against her, had received with a haughtiness which she had never before shown to the Duchess, her expostulation on the danger she ran of alienating the Count's affection from her ; and thus a general coldness and dissatisfaction insensibly gained ground, in a circle hitherto united so firmly———By turns she soothed, rallied, and resented, the evident dissatisfaction of the Count. When she saw him too much dejected, she would cast upon him one of those heavenly smiles which she knew to be irresistible. If she observed hope and confidence arising in his breast, if he were gay and happy, then she would throw upon him some marked neglect to thwart his humor. If then, stung to the heart, he avoided her, she would with some sweet blandishment draw him again to her side. Sometimes she would urge his generous nature, by contradiction or disdain,

almost to madness, and then suddenly change her demeanor to something so indescribably humble and tender, that not to pardon her follies would appear to him outrage and cruelty. To live without her favor was to him but living death, and much did he pass over to preserve it. Yet was he most unhappy. His countenance betrayed his secret anxiety : enthralled as never man was, one might say of him, ‘ he loves, he hates, but cannot live without her ? ’

But often did his burning cheek, and quivering lip, betray in spite of silence the anguish of his soul. ‘ I am to blame,’ would he sometimes say to the Duke, ‘ I am to blame to endure all this. Duke, it is as you said, I am formed to be a woman’s dupe . . . your sister is a beauteous fiend.’ The Duke was in utter dismay at his

sister's conduct. To console Lord Mansfeldt was impossible: to advise, most difficult. He therefore listened to his complaints, and it was all that he could do.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

ONE example of those scenes will serve, which took place every ten days. Lady Clarenstein had for many days treated the Count with more uninterrupted haughtiness and chilling indifference, than it was her custom to do. It was indeed her plan to proceed, step by step, with caution towards that climax of submission, if the expression may be allowed, to which she meant to bring him. Perceiving however in him a

degree of resentment at her conduct which she had never before seen him express, she felt somewhat checked in her career, and less security in her power. In the art of tormenting, she feared that she had outdone herself, and with some anxiety observed the cold politeness which it seemed now to be *possible* for him to maintain with resolution for several days. This the wily lady saw, and resolved to allay the storm, nay even to turn this his new-born courage adroitly to her own advantage.

One day she entered the saloon a short time before dinner, and finding no one there, she drew near the harp of the Duchess, and played a few chords, en fantaisie, to pass the time, when she heard the measured step of the noble lover in the antichamber. From the clusters of her dark

ringlets, the cunning enchantress marked his entrance. She perceived him, on the threshold of the door, step back as designing not to enter, when he saw her alone in the saloon——He came forward, however : he looked ill, and going up to the chimney-piece, stood there, shading his eyes with his hand. With all the exquisite art of which she was mistress, and well she knew how to do it, she struck on the harp, some tones deep and powerful, which often, Lord Mansfeldt had told her, went to his heart. Now, however, in silent dejection he listened, and expressed no pleasure. So, turning her head carelessly, she said, ‘are you ill to-day, Lord Mansfeldt?’

‘ No, madam.’

‘ Then you have got the womanish complaint of the spleen, perhaps, or a fit of apathy . . . do tell me what is the matter with you ? ’

‘ Nothing, madam.’

‘ Nothing ! Surely, my Lord the Count is not out of humor.’

‘ I am not out of humor, Lady Clarenstein.’

‘ Out of spirits then, about nothing.’

The Count made no reply.

‘ What is it that discomposes you, General ? ’ said she insolently ; ‘ has Tartar got a cold ? ’

The Count colored.

'Perhaps the fair Olympia, whom you think so handsome, has not been gracious to-day. Have you been with her all the morning?'

The Count looked at Lady Clarenstein with a dignity that caused her heart to flutter, and the more she was ashamed of the reproach conveyed in it, the more she felt resolved to destroy his composure. 'Well, General, as you please. If you do not like my attentive kindness, I can be silent. Perhaps you think, silence becomes a woman better than speech.'

The Count then said with severity, 'I could almost say I do think so, when to insult a man who loves you as his own soul, is all the use

that is made of speech. Those attentions are not kind—but if you wish to know why I am dejected, the cause is with yourself. I feel the pain which you wish to inflict on me. Your delight is to insult and wound me, and you succeed in the last so well, as to render my life wretched, and my love for you, a public shame. Here the Count paused : he sighed heavily ; and in a tone of profound melancholy, he said . . . ‘ perhaps you will be sorry one day to have treated me thus, and thus to weaken your own powers on a heart like mine.’

At that instant the Duchess entered, and with her, the company who were that day to compose the party at dinner. Lady Clarenstein walked to her seat, looked discomposed, and heard not two or three things which were pointedly address-

ed to her. She recovered herself, however, and calling her magic about her, she began the insidious attack. She saw that Lord Mansfeldt did not observe her,—He stood at a distance conversing with a gentleman. You shall attend to me, at least, said she to herself. Fortunately for her intention, some one inquired if her ladyship had rode that morning. She answered in a voice of the most softened penetrating delicacy, ‘I meant to have gone out, but the General said he thought that I should find it too hot to ride.’ These simple words effectually drew the General’s attention. He looked at her with a kind of surprise, what was become of that tone in which, five minutes before, she had addressed him. She turned away her eyes, and blushed, and sighed.

At dinner, the beautiful Countess could eat nothing. She said nothing. She only sighed very often, and answered, à tort et à travers, all that was said to her. What was become of that enchanting gaiety of conversation, so full of contrasted grace, so near being wit, so near being sentimental ! Count Mansfeldt's eyes were every moment fixed on her fair face, and every moment withdrawn, for the artful Rosamund most eloquently in silent confusion, succeeded in making Lord Mansfeldt understand that his eye distressed her. He said to himself, ' It is not possible that what I said could hurt her.' He turned to the servant who stood behind him, and whispered something to him. The man came round, and said to Lady Clarenstein, that General Mansfeldt begged that she would allow him to send her some champagne. She looked surprised ;

stammered out something that the servant did not understand—but Lord Mansfeldt, without waiting for an assent audibly expressed, sent the wine, which the artful lady touched with her lips, and put it down as if it were but in compliance with his request that she took it. A tear from her beautiful eyes fell into the wine. Now Lord Mansfeldt was resolved to have that tear. His eye coveted it. He said in a low voice, ‘send me that.’ Then aloud—‘Lady Clarenstein, I forgot that you do not like the smooth champagne. Bring that back to me, and take Lady Clarenstein some of the other.’ ‘It is very good, my Lord,’ said the Countess. ‘I know it,’ said the Count. She sent him the wine, and the Count swallowed a draft of poison: for ten thousand witcheries were in the Circean cup. ‘All is safe,’ said she to herself. ‘He loves me.

He cannot bear the sight of my tears.' Now when they rose to go, Lord Mansfeldt opened the door, and as she passed he looked at her with steadiness as if he would read her soul. 'Are you ill?' he said.

'No, only hurt.'

'At what?'

An eye of soft submission, a smile chastened by sensibility, were cast on the soldier, and in a low voice, she said, 'Indeed I deserve all that you said, and more.' She passed him with these words, but she saw the eager impassioned action of the Count, who attempted to seize that delicate hand, as it threw over her bosom her embroidered scarf.

It was an opera night. The Duchess and Lord Mansfeldt, and the rest of her party, were taking their coffee, when the carriage was announced. ‘Let Lady Clarenstein know,’ said the Duchess. Bertrand returned with a note which the Duchess read, and said, ‘Lady Clarenstein is not very well to-night, and does not go with me.’ Lord Mansfeldt looked disappointed as he had watched the door incessantly since he came up stairs, and as he conducted the Duchess to her carriage, he said, ‘Lady Clarenstein is not really ill?’

‘Oh no;—only a slight head-ache. I thought that she was not in her usual spirits, at dinner. I can take you with me if you will.’

‘Thank you. Yes, if I go to the opera.’

‘ You had better go at least, if you return’ said the Duchess, archly. ‘ It will look like a ruse de guerre, ou de l’amour, if both of you have a head-ache announced at the opera.’

Lord Mansfeldt smiled, and went with the Duchess.

Now the idea that he had made the beloved lady of his soul uncomfortable, that he had deprived her of an amusement she so greatly liked as that of the opera, gave such great pain to the honest noble heart of the Count, that he found the opera perfectly insupportable . . Never in his life could he resist an humble or a penitent look from any one, however greatly he had reason to be displeased. All her recent conduct was forgotten. He accused himself of harshness and

discourtesy, and longed to be at her feet once more. He went back to the Hôtel: he sent a note to her, begging her to let him come to her.

Lady Clarenstein was in the dressing-room of the Duchess, when the note was brought to her. She said carelessly, not knowing from whom it came, ‘Very well, lay it down.’ Bertrand lingered.—‘Monsieur le Comte espère, attend une réponse de Madame.’ She took up the billet—her proud heart fluttered in her proud bosom. ‘Our crest is fallen—we droop the conquered wing.’ ‘Dites au Général que je serai bien aise de le voir.’

Now the Countess, expecting no interruption, not dreaming of the Count’s return, had establish-

ed herself at her ease. All her graces seemed to have flown around her, softened into a bewitching languor, as if to dispel, by fresh enchantment, each latent resentment in his noble breast. Her dress was somewhat less recherché than usual. A few flowers lay in her breast between the lace of her handkerchief. Over her ivory arms, more delicate than ever in their grace, fell her scarf. On the couch beside her, lay some strings of pearl which she had taken off her neck, and a small casket of mother-of-pearl was open, from which were scattered several billets bearing the signature of the Count. The beautiful light which came from an alabaster vase, fell on her matchless form, and softened her usual animation into a pensive grace. When the Count came in, she half rose, and threw into her reception ten thousand timid graces. A smile, a

downcast look, a gesture of that graceful hand, motioned to him to take a seat on the sofa by her side.

‘Are you so soon weary of the Opera?’ she said. ‘Is it full to-night?’

‘I scarcely know—I believe so—I waited only to hear that air which Rosani sings, and you sing a thousand times better; and then I came—How is your head?’

‘Oh, it is quite well.’

‘I came to say’—said the Count, hesitatingly.

‘Not to say you are incensed against me, I hope,’ abruptly said the wily enchantress.

'I cannot bear, my Lord, that you should think that I have a *pleasure* in wounding you; that I could have the thought to—to—insult you?'

This word was spoken so low, as if its very sound were profanation to utter in the Count's ear, and she condescended to press the Count's hands in her's.—' You have looked at me so coldly for some days past, that I was vexed and irritated—and—but it cannot be thought that, whatever are my follies, I intend—I design—to make *you* unhappy, who have so much indulgence for them.'

Oh witchery and seduction! Was it possible to do other than be appeased! The Count was in Paradise. He failed not to observe his own

letters which were fallen from the casket. He took up one and read it, and looked at the young Countess.

‘ Were you,’ cried he, ‘ reading these?’

‘ Yes,’ she half pronounced, and a color like that of a rose came over her face. The delicacy of Lady Clarenstein’s complexion allowed every varying emotion of her soul to be seen. Her animation, her modesty, her pleasure, were depicted on her countenance with a delicacy that would have been unobserved in a countenance of more permanent hue. The roseate color crept over the polished ivory, and fled, and returned. The long silken fringes which shadowed her brilliant eye cast a shade on her cheek, so exquisite was the purity of her complexion; and often

they let themselves fall, and often slowly raised themselves, and sometimes they glistened with tears.

‘ Idol of my soul,’ cried the Count, ‘ I cannot endure these tears. Is it possible that what I said could so much affect you ?’

‘ Every thing you say affects me.’

‘ I would give my right hand that I had not been so intemperate. What can I do now ?’

‘ Shall I tell you ?’

‘ Yes,’ exclaimed the Count, bending his forehead on her hands.

‘ Give me,’ cried the Countess, and she deigned to touch the forehead of the Count, and to curl her delicate fingers round the rich clusters of his hair, ‘ give me one of those handsome curls.’

Now the Count looked up and smiled. He was the only person in the world, who but rarely thought either of his head, like the Antinous, or of his hands, finer than those of Vandyke, or of his hair, which was so remarkable for its beauty. So he smiled, and looked a little confused at the expression of ‘ handsome.’

The Countess separated a rich curl, and cut it off.

‘ Is it handsome?’ said the Count, touching it.

She pressed it to her lips, and put it in the casket.

‘ Nay,’ cried the Count, ‘ be not kinder to it than to its master—My happy hair!—Would I were that curl !’

‘ Why you would not like to be shut up in this casket, and wrapped in silver paper ?’

‘ Yes, I should, if you would unlock the casket fifty times a day, and say I was handsome, and smile, and say you loved me.’

The Countess said with a charming gaiety, ‘ You *are* very handsome, and I *do* love you, and I *do* smile.’

‘ Nay, you must do more.’

‘ No, Lord Mansfeldt, that is enough; I can do nothing more.’

‘ You can, but will not. But by all that’s enchanting, it shall not pass so. Be gracious, angel, and refuse me not.’

So nicely tempered was the witchery of the young Countess, so happily did it blend the tenderness of a lover with the delicacy and dignity of the woman, that it kept alive all that timidity, that uncertainty, that fear of offending, which is a master art in the science of coquetry. And perhaps, never was there a man more awakened to all the delicate shades of feeling than Lord

Mansfeldt, and never did he adore Lady Clarenstein with more profound respect than when, after having granted something to his impassioned heart, she by assuming all the chaste reserve of virgin dignity, in a moment awed and reduced to its habitual suppression the too impetuous expression of his feelings. She said to him, ‘Lord Mansfeldt, if you will bring my harp, I will play to you.’

He arose and brought it to her: she played some of those warlike and sonorous airs which he loved so well. And soon he fell into a sweet and pensive repose, his fine hand shading his eyes, listening to the entrancing sounds which seemed to waken a responsive chord in his soul; every vexation soothed, every care forgotten,

every anxious thought melted by harmony into one deep and powerful feeling of happiness and peace.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

ONE day at the table of the Count Brumaire, where were assembled the first families of Vienna, the Duke and Duchess, Lady Clarenstein and Lord Mansfeldt being also present, the conversation turned on a new presentation, which had lately taken place at Court, of a young lady whose person and accomplishments were now the subject of dispute. At length, Count Bru-

maire said to the Prince di Bronti who had been silent during the whole discussion, ‘Et vous, mon Prince, qu’en pensez vous ?’

‘ Moi, Monsieur le Comte—ce que j’en pense : —Oh elle est charmante sans doute,’ returned the Prince, with an air of profound indifference. ‘ Mais aussi je ne prétends pas décider sur la beauté. Je sais tout au plus ce qui m’enchante.’ And so saying, the Prince threw his eyes on Lady Clarenstein, who sat opposite to him.

‘ C’est tout ce qui est d’importance à savoir,’ said the Count Brumaire, ‘ mais laquelle de nos dames Autrichiennes peut se vanter d’enchanter votre Altesse ?’

‘ Laquelle—oh elles sont toutes belles comme les Houris, les Anges, les Déesses.’

‘ Mais parmi ces Déesses, à qui donnerez vous la pomme d’or ?’

‘ On ne peut qu’adorer celle à qui Monsieur le Comte a présenté la sienne,’ said the Prince, gallantly bowing to the Countess Brumaire.

‘ Ce sont des évasions, mon Prince.’

The Prince affected to be embarrassed. He cast down his eyes, but not ’till after they had again thrown themselves upon the beauteous sister of the Duke. ‘ Je pourrois bien,’ at length he said, ‘ mais dans ce moment je n’oserois la désigner.’

The young Countess looked as if she understood the compliment: and Lord Mansfeldt frowned on the youthful Paris.

But from this incident, unimportant as it appeared, sprang all the Count's misfortunes.

The next morning, as with folded arms and measured step, the Count was musing in a retired walk of the gardens, he perceived Julio, the Prince's page, entering the garden-gate. Surprised, he observed him, and saw him make towards the apartments of Lady Clarenstein, which looked as well as his own, into the gardens. He carried in his hand a basket richly ornamented, filled with flowers, and covered with a rich silver gauze. On the Count's approach, Julio, as if with a design to avoid him, turned a little from the path. ‘Stay,’ cried the Count, with a tone of authority, ‘whither are you carrying that basket?’

‘A la sua Eccellenza la Contessa di Clarenstein,’ said the boy.

‘From whom?’

‘Dal Signor mio, il Principe di Bronti.’ The Count threw up the gauze, and discovered in the midst of some delicate flowers, une pomme d’or beautifully imitated, and enriched with most delicate materials. There was besides a billet addressed ‘Al unica ed imperiale Rosa, Contessa di Clarenstein.’ The Count took up the apple in his hand, and saw engraven upon it,

‘Altri mi sembra bella,
Ma tu mi sembra quella
Che paragon non ha.’

The Count replaced the apple; threw the gauze over the basket, and said, ‘Carry it where you were directed.’

The Page bowed and retired.

The Count stood rooted to the spot. He laid his hand on his forehead. Sighs burst from his bosom, and all his soul was in tumults. His temper, generous but impetuous by nature, revolted at the thought of insult and degradation, and he sickened as the idea darted across his mind, that he was but the dupe and plaything of her will, whilst the Prince, perhaps—The thought stung him like a serpent, but that native greatness of soul which believing no ill thinks none, and is not evermore ready to suspect that others mean to cast indignity upon it, dispelled the nascent

thought. ‘No,’ said the generous lover, ‘I will not so easily believe that she can mean to play me false—She may not receive it—she may send it back—I will not so much distrust her ’till I have farther cause—I do believe that an Angel is not in thought more pure.’

He proceeded to the apartments of the Duchess. As he entered, he heard the Duke’s voice and Lady Clarenstein in earnest discourse. ‘Let me entreat you, Rosamund,’ he heard the Duke say, ‘send back this bauble; to accept it is to authorise the Prince’s hopes—not for all the world would I have Mansfeldt see it!’

At that instant Lord Mansfeldt entered, and saw on a table, by which stood the Duke and his sister, the basket, *la pomme d’or*, and the Prince’s

billet which she had just received. The Duke, coming in unexpectedly, had seen and was counselling her to return it to the Prince, with a polite refusal.

As soon as she saw the Count enter, she said gaily, ‘ I am not disposed to send back any thing half so pretty. Here is the Count himself, let us ask him what he thinks of it.’

The Duke, astonished at her audacity, looked at her in silence. ‘ My Lord,’ went she on, taking up the apple in her hand, and presenting it to him, ‘ is it not the prettiest thing you ever saw ?’

The Count calmly laid the apple down. Lady Clarenstein, irritated at his composure, was

resolved to make him speak. ‘ What do you say, my Lord? Is it not altogether a most elegant and winning piece of gallantry in the Prince?’

The Count heaved an indignant sigh, and turned away.

‘ Have you no delicacy, no feeling?’ said the Duke.

‘ At what is all this anger?’ asked the Countess, with a provoking astonishment. ‘ Pray, brother, do inform me what it is that displeases you? Lord Mansfeldt, as you see, attaches no importance to this apple, which you are resolved to convert into an apple of discord—unless, indeed, for the pleasure of creating it between you and

me, Lord Mansfeldt has transferred the expression of his sentiments to you.'

The Count, much agitated, clasped his hands to his forehead. The Duke gently took his sister's hands in his, and said affectionately, ' You will be sorry for that speech an hour hence, and therefore before-hand I forgive you for it. Send back the apple. I beg it of you. Can you have the heart,' continued the Duke in a whisper, directing her eye to Lord Mansfeldt, ' can you have the heart to do a thing so injurious to his best feelings ?'

The Countess looked at Lord Mansfeldt, and a half-stifled laugh was all the answer which she made. The Duke, no longer able to restrain his indignation, cast his sister's hand from him. ' Are

you a woman?' he cried, in a loud and severe voice; and then followed an altercation between him and his sister, in which she kept her temper with the most provoking coolness. The Duke severely reproached her for her conduct to Lord Mansfeldt. ' You ought, madam, to be ten times in an hour on your knees to him, to beseech him to have patience with you. Can you,' continued the Duke, with something of an ungentle force, obliging the slender form of his sister to bend beneath his hands, ' can those proud knees stoop so low?' The Countess burst into tears.

' Rhonberg,' cried Lord Mansfeldt ' you distract me! For the love of heaven——Lady Clarenstein'——

‘ Mansfeldt,’ cried the Duke, ‘ you are a fool ;’ seeing that her tears affected the Count. ‘ Are you not ashamed, madam, to see his generous soul ready to pardon all ?’

‘ I will no longer endure this !’ said the Countess, recovering herself. ‘ Lord Mansfeldt, if it is true that I have any power over you, if you would not mortally offend me, leave the room !’

Lord Mansfeldt then said with great dignity, ‘ I will obey you, madam. I came not here with my unfortunate love to sow dissension between you and the Duke. Such scenes distract me. You do too much abuse your power.’

The Count retired, and the Duke followed him.

The remainder of that day passed in sullenness and displeasure on the part of Lady Clarenstein, 'till the evening, when, as usual, she attended the Duchess to the Opera. The gentle Hermione, distressed at the dissensions in her family, desirous of peace, yet too discreet to take upon herself any interference in so delicate a conjuncture, went in silence to her loge : in order not to see what would pain her, she attended solely to the Opera. Not so the haughty Clarenstein : she did nothing but talk incessantly to the Prince, who sat behind her, leaning his arm on the back of her chair, and evermore whispering in her ear. The Count said in a low voice to the Duke, ' I cannot stand this ;' and they both went out of the box. Wher- ever the former went, he heard of nothing but allusions to *la pomme d'or*, whose offer and accept- ance seemed to excite envy in the women, and

raillery in the men. From the opposite side of the house, the Count saw the assiduities of the Prince; nay, he fancied that his eyes and those of the Countess were frequently directed towards him. He thought that he heard her laugh, and his soul sickened, and his temper fired.

‘Count,’ said a Cavalier to him, ‘if you take not better care of your Helen, Paris will carry her off, and we shall have a Trojan war over again.’ The Count attempted to smile, but it was a vain effort, and he went back to the box: he knew not what to do: harassed and irresolute, he had neither courage to remain with composure in her presence, nor yet to keep out of it.

Now, either by design or accident, the Countess let her cloak fall over the box into the pit. The

Prince half arose, saying, that he would fetch it, when, with infinite politeness, she detained him, saying, ‘ Mon Prince—je vous supplie—ne vous dérangez pas.’ Then turning her head carelessly to Lord Mansfeldt, she continued, ‘ Ayez la bonté, Général, de m’apporter mon écharpe.’

The Count colored, went out of the box, and returning, bent forward and said gravely, ‘ I have told one of the servants to fetch it, Lady Clarenstein.’

When it came, the Count presented it to her—She affected not to see him. The Duchess touched her hand, shocked at her behavior. Obliged then to receive it, she just said, ‘ Merci, Monsieur le Comte.’ ‘ Mon Prince, jettez cela sur moi. J’ai froid comme la glace.’

‘ Shall I endure this?’ said the Count to himself.

Now when they rose to leave the house, the Prince, with insufferable insolence, affected to think that he had no pretensions to the honor of leading the Countess to her carriage. The Duchess had already left the box. Now there were several other men in it, and Lady Clarenstein felt rather in an embarrassment. The Count, so far from availing himself of his accustomed privilege, moved back a few steps, as if to say, ‘ I can have no pretensions.’ The Prince then offered his arm. The gentlemen smiled, and one of them said, loud enough for the incensed Clarenstein to hear, ‘ Bravo, General.’

Now the Count was far from intending that this should have been observed, and he blamed himself for having suffered his goaded feelings to get the better of his temper. As to the young Countess, she was enraged beyond all measure, and told the Duchess that nothing should make her receive the Count again, without an atonement for so public an insult. The Duchess sighed, embraced the angry Rosamund, and they separated for the night.

The Duke went early the next morning to Lord Mansfeldt's chamber, and found him reading. 'I came,' said he, 'to say a few words to you on the subject of this imperious and wayward girl. It is so harassing to me to see my noble friend the sport of her caprice, that I am nearly as

miserable as—' The Duke stopped, for he saw the Count's color rising.

' Say what you meant, Duke—I am miserable !'

' Tell me, Raymond, may I speak frankly ?'

' I can hear any thing from you.'

' Can you renounce her ?'

The Count turned pale.

' I advise it,' said the Duke.

' Why ?'

‘Because I see little chance for you but a repetition of the same unworthy treatment.’

The Count was silent for a moment; then he said, ‘Is that your only reason?’

‘The only one.’

‘Then,’ said the Count, in an inward voice, ‘I cannot renounce her; while a faint hope remains, I am utterly enslaved.’

‘You will then, perhaps,’ replied the Duke, ‘accede to what I came to propose. Last night you offended her. She resents it. We must grant something to her woman’s pride. The Duchess tells me, that unless you make some concession to her, all is lost.’

' She has much abused my forbearance——yet at any price short of absolute dishonor, I would woo back her favor. How do you counsel me to proceed ? '

' Say you are sorry ; that you meant not to offend her ; that you were to blame.'

The Count bit his lips. ' I cannot say that.'

' Then write it.'

The Count took some paper ; rapidly wrote some lines, and sent them to the apartments of the Countess.

The Duke and Lord Mansfeldt, while waiting for her answer with anxiety, walked to the win-

door which was open, and looked into the gardens. Suddenly they saw a door of her pavilion open, and the Countess, with Constantine, Eugene, and their attendants, come into the garden. Her beautiful head was unveiled ; and so lightly, and with such a youthful spirit, did she tread, as if sorrow never came near her. She gathered some purple flowers, and put them into her hair.

‘ She has not received your letter, I think,’ said the Duke.

As he spoke, Helene came from the house, and presented it to her. She looked surprised, walked on a few steps from the children, and read it. She seemed touched. She passed her hand across her forehead, as if accusing herself of something,

then re-perused it, pressed the signature to her lips, and put it within the lace that covered her bosom.

To conceal the glow of animation which this action produced in him, Lord Mansfeldt turned hastily away from the window, and the Duke, pressing his hand, said archly, ‘Come, we need not despair yet. If you are wise, you will go to her.’ The Duke left the room, and Lord Mansfeldt leaped into the garden.

She had taken another direction, and when Lord Mansfeldt came up she was seated on a bench beneath the shade of some orange-trees. She heard the Count’s step—half rose, and then re-seated herself. She looked pensive and disconcerted.

‘ Pray give me your hand,’ said the Count ;
‘ let us be friends.’

The Countess made no reply. She had been unawares touched to the heart by the Count’s eloquent note, and she was not prepared to receive him with her usual indifference. So she turned away her head, and said, but not in an ungentele tone, ‘ Before the whole Opera ! You are proud, my Lord ! ’

Now the Count was too noble to accuse himself of what he considered not as an injury deserving great resentment. So he said calmly, ‘ To be your lacquey, I am. Yet witness heaven, I would do any thing to serve you.’

‘ The man who serves me shall do it in all things, and at all times.’

‘*In all, but in that you would yourself despise me for doing.*’

‘I make no distinctions, Count Mansfeldt.’

The Count was silent a moment, at length he said, ‘I love you. Suffer me to do it as becomes a man and a gentleman. Accept my atonement. Pray give me your hand—nay, I will have it—and the Count kissed it thrice. ‘Each,’ said he, ‘is worth a kingdom.’ That expression had been used before—the Countess remembered it, and all her softness fled.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

GENTLE Reader, suffer me to pass over this period of my heroine's story as rapidly as possible. It is with a reluctant pen that I trace these instances of her intemperate humor. Noble she is, and generous, and tender, but all these qualities are now obscured by a strong and revengeful passion, which, hurrying her on in spite of reason and good feeling, renders her regardless

of all consequences; though, sometimes, as the thought passes through her mind, that perchance she may alienate the Count's affection, she feels strange and afflicting apprehensions of such an issue to her machinations. For though but half conscious of the state in which her heart is, and blinded by passion, she yet has some faint transient forebodings of what at length her conduct did effect. A false sense of glory makes her take pleasure now to tyrannise over a heart she holds most precious. Him whom all men honor, and of whom the most youthful and fairest dames of her country envy her the homage, it is now her joy and sport to seem lightly to esteem. Yet insolent as she was, it was not without great internal conflict and difficulty that she cast these slights on the noble Mansfeldt. Every haughty and neglectful word or action cost her infinite

pains, and required more command of feeling and temper than it would have taken to vanquish that excess of pride which caused her so to act. There was a calm dignity about the Count, that rendered it almost impossible, and next to profanation in the idea of those around, to use a slighting word to him. Nay, even his most familiar friends, those to whom his affections glowed with the most warmth, could never divest themselves of a certain shade of fear to displease him. Lord Mansfeldt had in all his sentiments that tone of measured feeling which, by evincing that we produce not all the fire and sensibility of our nature to common eyes, keeps alive a solicitude to retain what we already possess of so noble a heart; and, if possible, to acquire still greater influence. ‘But they shall see,’ she often said

to herself, ‘ that I dare do what no other woman dare.’

There was a council of state held that day, at which the Duke was obliged to be present. He was detained much longer than he expected. The Duchess, with a large company who were to dine with him, were already assembled in the saloon, awaiting his return, when a note from him was brought to the Duchess, containing these words :

‘ It will be an hour before I can come to you—
Do not wait dinner for me, unless you prefer it.—
Make my excuses to our friends.

RHONBERG.'

Hermione communicated this intelligence to the company. As it appeared the general desire that they should wait the Duke's return, an old lady of the Court proposed, that in order to pass the hour, they should play at a game, at that time much in fashion. It was therefore so agreed.

'Now,' said the Lady who had proposed the game, 'we will, with your consent, Lady Duchess, find out whether our gentlemen have any wit in those fine heads of theirs.'

'With all my heart, Madam; but how shall it be?'

'Why, we will do as we used to do when I was young, in ancient days, when all the men were witty, and all the women handsome.'

‘What I propose is, that each of us make two verses extempore on any subject we please. In my time, that was always upon the women.’

I shall not engage to transmit to posterity any of these fine couplets. Suffice it to say, that les gages multiplied, and Lord Mansfeldt, declaring that he was no poet, gave his dagger in charge to a young lady, who held them in her lap. They now prepared to redeem them. The old lady, declaring that she was the best inventor of penances, sat as judge; and that she might be impartial as Justice herself, her eyes were blinded. According to her declaration, the penances she imposed were so diverting, that the saloon soon echoed with gaiety and animation. Even Lord Mansfeldt laughed. His heart was lighter than

it had been for many days, for the peerless Clarenstein was gracious: and though the Prince kept his station by her chair, yet she was so much occupied by the game, that she attended to him but little. There still remained many forfeits to redeem, when the lady who had them in charge took up the poignard. ‘And what is he to do who owns this,’ she said. The old lady answered, ‘I command him to place a foot-stool to the Countess of Clarenstein, and reverently kneeling, to place her foot upon it.’ At these words the noble soldier arose, and with a smiling air, took up a foot-stool, and approached the Countess, in whose mind the bad angel at that moment put a rapid thought. ‘Now,’ said she, ‘I will be revenged for the slight which he put upon me yesterday.’ The Count, with the grace of a God, bent his knee, took in his hand the

delicate foot of Lady Clarenstein, placed it on the footstool, and ere he withdrew his hand, he gently pressed her instep, and said in a whisper, ‘Let this atone.’ The haughty Clarenstein abruptly arose, and with a look of scorn, pushed with ungentle force the foot-stool from her, and in the action, either by design or accident, the Count’s hand was struck back by her foot. Instantly he sprung on his feet, and his eye flashed fire. ‘Is that by design or accident?’ he cried.

‘By design,’ she answered.

‘As an insult meant?’

‘As you please to take it.’

The persons assembled looked at one another. The game was suspended. The Duchess was

distressed, and Lord Mansfeldt retired out of the circle. A general dissatisfaction prevailed, and in the midst of this scene the door opened, and the Duke appeared. He was for some moments in the room, ere he perceived the state in which they were. He looked at the Duchess, and seeing by her countenance that something was wrong, which could not then admit of an explanation, he took no notice of it. Dinner was announced, and the Duke overheard his sister say to the Prince, as she went down stairs, ‘I think that the lion is hunted.’ Then the Duke looked at Lord Mansfeldt, and it was no longer doubtful to him, that the Count had received some fresh insult. Never had he seen a countenance so expressive of suppression, even to torture. Lady Clarenstein, intoxicated with pride, seemed no

longer to retain a feeling of delicacy, or generosity. During all the dinner she ceased not to cast upon him the most bitter raillery, adverting perpetually to the circumstance, which had passed before dinner, and forcing the whole company to observe a disorder, already too visible. Lord Mansfeldt, though the most temperate of men, scarcely knowing what he did, and several times on the point of leaving the table, drank glass after glass of wine, and in his absence committed a thousand blunders, of every one of which the Countess made her theme. At length the Count, urged beyond all endurance at something she said to him that required an answer, clasped his hands before his face, maddened with her insolence. The Duchess said in a low voice (for he sat next to her) ‘do not answer. I will retire in a moment,’ which accordingly she did, herself and

all the ladies being incensed and scandalised at such conduct. The old lady of the Court more than all was incensed. She seldom made a secret of her sentiments, and accordingly all the way to the saloon she muttered loud enough for Lady Clarenstein to hear, ‘ Fie, fie: no Lady in my time would have done so. I had lovers of all sorts, but I never behaved so to any of them.’ Unparalleled indeed it was, and the Countess herself began to fear that she had gone too far. She left the saloon, and went into the colonnade to breathe the fresh air, and to recover herself. But here she had not long been given up to her own painful reproaches, when, to her consternation, she saw the Count enter the other end of the corridor, in his way to his own apartments. To meet him now was more than even the audacity of Lady Clarenstein dare do,

when she marked the paleness of his countenance, the fierceness in that usually serene and gentle figure, his step uncertain, and his hand striking his forehead repeatedly, as if his brain were fired. As she flew swiftly along the colonnade in haste to gain some refuge, the Count caught a glimpse of her figure, and came up to her with the speed of lightning. ‘Ah,’ cried he, ‘are you there? Well met, by heaven. . . . Stand,’ exclaimed he fiercely, ‘come back.’

‘Who shall dare detain me?’ She answered.

‘*I will.* By the thunder of heaven, you shall hear me. ’Tis an ill moment to cross my path! Angel! Demon! What are you?’ continued the Count, grasping her wrist. ‘Who are you that dare make me your sport? Listen to me,’ con-

tinued he with fierceness ; ‘ you have grossly, scandalously insulted me, and I desire to know by what right you dare to do it? Not by my mad love, for that shall no longer warrant it. Is the lion hunted ? You have roused the tiger in me, and by heaven, if you were not a woman, you should everlastingly rue your sport. Pernicious beauty,’ went on the Count with a fierce smile, ‘ what prevents me from taking ample vengeance for all your insults ? You keep no terms with *me*! you treat *me* like your slave, your servant ! Shall I be the fool to take it all as patiently as a beaten cur ? What terms do you keep with me, proud, unfeeling woman ? ’

Lady Clarenstein was struck with terror. She turned very pale, and she felt herself unable to stand. Her head fell back, and the jewels which

fastened her hair giving way, it all fell down in rich waves over the Count's arm. His rage subsided, seeing her disorder and all her color vanish, and he left her at liberty to depart, saying, with a smothered passion, ' Depart, be gone : take thyself, and all thy fatal charms from my eyes . . . beyond my grasp . . . beyond my thought, if that be possible. Depart, lest in my rage I execrate what I adore ! For maddened as I am, you yet well know, that if I had for one instant profaned those exquisite charms, I should have died with grief ! . . . Now *smile* . . . *laugh* . . Begone to the dainty Prince, and tell him how "the Lion is hunted."'

' Oh my soul ! ' cried the Count, striking his forehead, ' what mad rage is this ? Where is my reason, my manhood fled ? '

At these words, the Count rushed from the colonnade, and disappeared from the eyes of Lady Clarenstein, who fled to her chamber, like a bird frightened and dismayed by a sudden storm. She sunk into a chair, and sat motionless for some moments, 'till Helene, alarmed at her mistress' disorder, presented her a glass of water, which Lady Clarenstein drank without speaking, threw herself back in the chair, and shed a torrent of tears.

'Oh, my dearest Lady, what has happened, and why are you thus disordered? Let me go for my Lady Duchess.'

Lady Clarenstein laid her hand on Helene's arm to prevent her. She recovered herself so

far as to dismiss Helene : and alone, given up to her reflexions, she bitterly reproached herself. The sound of the Count's voice yet rung in her ears ; she felt his grasp on her wrist, which unknowingly, he had wounded with her bracelet. Confounded at a storm so violent, in a mind usually so serene, so undisturbed by passion, she for the first time, trembled at her audacity, and sickened at the idea of what she had dared to do. In this state she remained above two hours, when she saw the Duchess, with a countenance of extreme distress, slowly enter. Lady Rosamund rose, and, throwing her arms round her, burst into tears.

‘ You know then,’ said the Duchess, ‘ what I came to say ? ’

‘ No—I know nothing.—What are you come to say?’

‘ That the Count is gone.’

‘ Gone!’

‘ Left the house! And his servants are ordered to follow him.’

‘ Hermione,’ cried Lady Rosamund, in an agony of grief, ‘ what shall I do?’

‘ Alas, my sister, it is what you have done.’

‘ Where is the Duke? Can he not prevent him? Why did he suffer him to——’

‘The Duke knew nothing of it ’till this moment. A note was brought to him.’

‘I will go to the Duke myself.’

The Duchess held her sister’s arm. ‘No, do not go, said she anxiously——’

‘Why?—what should prevent me?’

‘The Duke commanded me to tell you, that he would rather not see you to night. He is much incensed.’

‘But will he go then to Lord Mansfeldt? Where is he gone? Turned from the house in the state next to madness, in which he was!

Dear Hermione, I beseech you tell the Duke, if he will not see me, at least to have mercy on my distress ; and conjure him to find out Lord Mansfeldt, and beseech him to return. The Count is beside himself. I have seen him, heard him !'

' When, dear sister ?'

' After dinner, in the colonnade. Dear Duchess, delay not ! Tell the Duke, that I implore him instantly to follow Lord Mansfeldt.'

The tender Hermione complied with the Countess's desire. She returned and said, that the Duke was gone out, and no doubt it was to

the Hôtel, whither the Count's servants had orders to remove.

The evening was spent, as it may be supposed, in a state of the most painful solicitude. Lady Rosamund wept, and upbraided herself: besought the Duchess to pardon the shameful outrage which had passed in her house. The Duchess, all tenderness, soothed and supported her, and left her about twelve o'clock. The Duke was not then returned: but when he did, the Duchess, according to her promise, sent Lady Clarenstein a billet, informing her, that he had been with Lord Mansfeldt who was well; and the Duchess further informed her, that the Duke would see her in the morning, and then communicate what had passed between them.

Lady Clarenstein threw herself on the bed,
and never closed her eyes that night.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

At ten o'clock the Duke entered the chamber of his sister; he drew a chair towards the table by which she sat, and without seeming to observe her heavy eyes and harassed looks, he thus addressed her without a word of preface or reproach.

‘The man whom I esteem above all men, whose happiness I prize as my own, whose

honor is my honor, and his insult mine, was last night expelled the house in which he deigned to accept a residence. I never will solicit him to return. Never again, by my means, shall he be liable to receive such insults as he has suffered beneath my roof, from one of my house. I have seen Lord Mansfeldt. If it were possible, in a heart so dead to his unexampled perfections as yours is, to excite compunction, I could describe a scene that would somewhat wound you. But I forbear. I came only to say this, for it is all that the noble Mansfeldt desires, that he renounces the alliance—gives you back your vows—for this reason, that he is convinced that he is not beloved, and all the rest is nothing. He will leave Vienna to-morrow.' At these words the Duke arose, and moved towards the door, when, as he turned to open it, he saw Lady Cl-

renstein motionless as a statue, pale as death, her hands clasped over her breast, and sighs so profound issuing from her unclosed lips, that the Duke, alarmed, came back: he poured out a glass of water, and held it to her: she had no power to take it. She looked at the Duke with a sort of calm despair that touched him. He sat down by her, took her in his arms, and put the water to her lips, some of which she swallowed. Her hands were cold as death, and without motion. ‘Rosamund,’ said he gently, ‘speak to me. Recal your senses.’ Lady Clarenstein put her hand to her forehead. ‘My sister, my sweet Rosamund, speak to me. I have been abrupt.’

Without either gesture or motion, and in a

voice so low that it was scarcely audible, ‘ save me,’ she cried.

‘ From what? Rosamund, I adjure you, by heaven’s truth, be sincere. Has Lord Mansfeldt your affections?’

Lady Rosamund attempted to speak. Love and remorse made such a conflict in her breast, that her senses yielded to a temporary suspension, and she fainted. It was fortunate for her; for the Duke, convinced by this stroke of nature, of his sister’s sentiments, forgot all his severity, and resolved now to bring about a reconciliation, if possible, between her and Lord Mansfeldt.

At length, revived by the cares of the Duke, Lady Clarenstein opened her eyes, and then with

an eloquence which, when strongly impressed, ever animated her expressions, she poured forth the conflicting emotions of her soul, and inasmuch as by her promise given to the Prince, she was not authorised to palliate her conduct by acknowledging the principal cause of it, the more did her fears overwhelm her, that the heart of Lord Mansfeldt was for ever lost.

‘ Be of good courage,’ cried the Duke. ‘ I know the heart of Mansfeldt. He is as placable as he is slow to entertain resentment. The stormy passions are foreign to his nature. A sigh, a tear, a true word, disarm him. But it must be truth—if you love him, say so with candor. If not, play no more ungenerously with his passion, and let there be a speedy end to—’

‘ Oh, not for all the world contains,’ exclaimed Lady Clarenstein, throwing her arms round the Duke’s neck, and shedding a torrent of tears ; and in broken accents, she told him the scene of the last evening.

‘ Nay !’ cried the Duke, pressing her gently to his bosom, ‘ nay, then I pity you. For if you saw him at that moment, he would make himself be heard.’

‘ Heard indeed !’ said Lady Clarenstein. ‘ If for the first time I had heard a peal of thunder, it could not so have shaken my heart. What shall I do, my brother ? All my trust is in you, and if you will never solicit him to return—’

‘What is this,’ cried the Duke with a tone of anxiety, as he saw through the lace sleeve, the beautiful arm of his sister bound with ribbon. . . .
‘Have you hurt your arm?’

The young Countess said with hesitation, that she had sprained it—that it was her bracelet that had hurt it.

‘Your bracelet!’ said the Duke, incredulously. ‘How could that be? This is a wound.’

‘It was quite unintentional,’ said Lady Clarenstein. I am certain that he did not know it. It was in the anguish of his soul, and if he had

put his poignard in my breast, I could scarce have blamed him.'

' Oh now I understand. Poor Mansfeldt. He will be hurt.'

' He shall never know it,' said the Countess.

The Duke was resolved that he should : but he said nothing. He arose in silence, brought some paper to his sister, and putting a pen in her hand, and re-seating himself by her, said, ' write to him, and I will take it.' She obeyed, yet often cast the pen from her, doubting the efficacy, the force of every word, and bathing the paper with a shower of tears. ' Alas !' she cried, when it was finished, ' this is not legible !' The Duke

took the paper, and folding it up, put it in his breast, and, rising, said with affectionate solemnity ‘Mansfeldt shall return. I know that he cannot choose but do it. But, oh my sister, let this be the last trial of his forbearance. Another, and no art can recal him. Pray be advised. Pray have mercy on yourself. Mansfeldt is not more tender than he is firm.’ The Countess kissed her brother’s hand and wept. ‘Nay,’ cried the Duke, much moved, ‘you owe me nothing. You know that I cannot do other than serve you with all my soul. Keep some of this tenderness for him who wants assurance of your attachment. Do this to him, and you would win his soul from heaven! Farewel. Be consoled! Have courage! Henceforth be wise. Tarnish no more the chaste lustre of your fair fame! be to the

world, and to us, what you have power to be, the idol of all our hearts, and the brightest jewel of our house.'

With these words the Duke left the room, and repaired instantly to the Hôtel where Count Mansfeldt had taken up his residence. Here he did not find him. He was informed that Lord Mansfeldt had gone out early on horseback alone, and had taken the direction towards the forest of— which was at some distance from Vienna. The Duke mounted his horse, and followed him in that direction. As this forest was kept for the Emperor's hunting, it was unfrequented, except by those who were of his train, and was besides of so great extent that the Duke doubted not but that Lord Mansfeldt had gone there to avoid intrusion. As he approached, he saw one of the

keepers, and inquiring of him if he had seen Count Mansfeldt on that road, he learned that, about an hour before, the Count had entered the forest by an allée de chasse. The Duke followed him with all speed. Lord Mansfeldt had penetrated into the most retired place that he could find, and he was indulging, unseen, all the mighty war of his soul, when he heard the galloping of a horse's feet on the turf. The Duke no where seeing him he sought, stopped his horse, and called aloud several times the name of Mansfeldt. Then the Count, recognising his voice, came in view. The Duke dismounted: Lord Mansfeldt in silence embraced him, and said at length, 'My dear Rhonberg, I would be alone: I cannot see even you. Pray leave me. I blush that even the sun should behold my weakness.'

‘ I come,’ said the Duke, ‘ in the name
of——’

‘ No, no,’ cried the Count, impatiently, ‘ I
will hear nothing.’

‘ In the name of Rosamund,’ continued the
Duke.

‘ From *her*, nothing will I hear.—’

‘ To conjure you to return.’

‘ Never,’ cried the Count with force. ‘ It is
the last time. It is the last that ever I will be
the dupe of——’

‘ Hear me, Mansfeldt ;’ cried the Duke,
detaining him. And then he unfolded to him

what had passed at the Hôtel de Rhonberg since the preceding night, omitting nothing that could palliate his sister's conduct, or soften the Count's resentment: the Count listened with a fixed and sullen despair; and the Duke saw that the proud but generous Mansfeldt suffered a painful combat between his reason, and his love. At length, the Duke drew from his breast the letter of the Countess, at sight of which the Count started and refused to touch it.

‘ Nay, read it, at least,’ said the Duke.

‘ All blandishment and witchery,’ cried Lord Mansfeldt.

‘ Be not inexorable——forgive her.’

‘ I do : but I will never return. She loves me not.’

‘ You wrong her.’

‘ She has no heart.’

‘ A great deal, Mansfeldt.’

‘ But not for me ! ’Tis the Prince’s ;’ and Lord Mansfeldt bit his lips ; with a fierce smile putting back the offered letter.

‘ Poor Rosamund,’ said the Duke ; ‘ I doubt that you are right in your *fears*.’

‘ *Fears* ! what does she fear ?

‘With bitter agony of soul she fears that your heart is no longer her’s. When I offered to come to you, she told me that you would refuse to receive her letter, and that if you did, though it should destroy her happiness for ever, she could not blame you.’

‘Did she say that?’

‘This, and much more : accused herself with showers of tears—did justice to your forbearance, and lightly esteemed a certain wound on her fair arm, which, in your rage, she received from you.’

‘From me?’

‘ Aye——on her wrist,’ said the Duke, gravely.
‘ She would fain have hid it; and conjured me
not to tell you lest it should afflict you.’

The Count shook with the excess of his emotion: he took the letter from the Duke’s hand, who retired a few paces from him. But when the Count read what might be called the sighs of her remorse, and saw the paper still wet with her tears—when he heard the broken accents in which she told her love, and saw the words ‘ I am on your mercy for pardon,’ so blotted with tears that it was almost illegible, then love conquered, and following the Duke, he clasped his hand, and said in an inward voice of unutterable feeling, ‘ Rhonberg, let us go!’ Need it be said that, ere an hour elapsed, Lord Mansfeldt was at the feet of Lady Clarenstein? and all that the

noble lover said of reproach, when first he came,
was 'I do return, dear lady. Take my heart
again, and use it better.'

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

A HEAVENLY calm succeeded to this storm, and love reigned in the heart of Lord Mansfeldt with its softest influence : for the Countess, penetrated alike with the danger which she had run, and the happiness of having escaped from its consequences, thought that she never could expiate the wild caprice which she had evinced in her treatment of the noblest suitor, that had ever fallen to the lot of woman. A pensive softnes

hung over her, not enough to damp the grace and freshness of her spirits, but enough to render her a thousand times more interesting, and more powerful than ever. Such is the effect of native sweetness of manner, and feminine grace, united to brilliant talents.

It was in one of those moments that she yielded to the prayers of the Count, and the united wishes of her family, to suffer her marriage to be declared. I shall pass over the recital of all those preparations which are attendant on a great alliance : suffice it to say that they were made with all the expedition imaginable. The nuptial presents on both sides were the most costly that could be invented by good taste.

The Count beheld these magnificent preparations with satisfaction. Too noble in mind, and too simple in his habits, to be solicitous about the external parade of life, on woman he thought that it might be placed with a delicate propriety : and he would have been ill pleased to have had his wife unattended by all the splendid insignia of her rank and sex, though for himself he most lightly esteemed them. When, therefore, the Duchess one morning, as he entered her dressing room, displayed to him the jewels of the young Countess which had recently been sent home, he smiled, asked the purpose of several of the ornaments, and said ‘ The Helen will not only be beautiful but she will be splendidly adorned.’ The Count saw no beauty in a woman’s affecting to despise the natural tastes of her sex. He thought it to be a duty in a female to please by every

means in her power that could be pursued with virtue and honor. ‘For whom’ would he say, ‘but for that sex are the treasures of the earth destined? Theirs is the empire of beauty and taste. For them the ostrich bears its plumes. For them the mine yields its jewels; the earth, its flowers. Let us leave them in quiet possession of these treasures which are employ’d to adorn the loveliest and the most delicate of the creation.’

For this delicacy, this effeminacy, was, in the Count’s eyes, their greatest charm. The contrast could not in his opinion be too strong between the habits and manners of the two sexes; and a woman who could ride fifty miles, and boast the feeling of no fatigue was, in his fancy, a non-descript creature too masculine for woman, too weak for

man. Himself hardy, bold, simple in all his habits; nothing revolted him more than to see any of these qualities in women. Gentleness without weakness, delicacy without affectation, all the grace of sentiment, and all the pleasures which refinement could produce, these were in his thought the world of women: and when he entered their society he neither talked politics nor philosophy—he did not bring into their saloons his horses and his dogs, in order to describe a hunt, and compare their separate merits—neither did he wish to be instructed by the women in any of these points—he came to have his taste refined, his heart amended, and his feelings charmed. The Count could not be styled a man of gallantry. Often in the society of women he was silent, and seemed in a sort of pensive contentment to repose himself from weightier

affairs ; but more precious to women of taste and sensibility were his soft yet penetrating looks—his monosyllables—the tones of his voice which, when he addressed them, fell into a modulation of exquisite respect and tenderness—more precious were these I say, than all the extravagant and labored compliments with which women are often assailed—their self-love gratified and their good taste offended—and when the General of the Emperor's armies condescended to betray to them his manly ignorance of any thing which related peculiarly to woman's use, he was irresistible—for there is nothing in a truly great man which so touches the sex as those little condescensions ; while, on the other hand, nothing offends women more than a display of interference and a minute criticism on the part of men on subjects totally distinct from their habits and education. To all

the foibles of women the Count was indulgent—he did not insult them by evermore pitying them for not being men—he thought them very well as they were—he would not quarrel with a rose-tree because it has not the strength of an oak.

If any thing had, more than another, charmed him in the Countess of Clarenstein, it was that effeminate delicacy, that dainty grace, which tinctured her manners. He loved her for the influence which they had upon him. He felt her presence. Her soft step, when she approached him, spread a sort of balm on his senses. Her rounded movements, her voice so flexible, so sonorous—the absence of all the rugged actions of life—the still animation—the perfumed air—these, and a thousand other shades of habitual elegance which in her presence he saw and felt,

made the apartments of the Duchess an enchanted bower of repose, a climate breathing balm. Thus the royal eagle descending on the plain, plumes his wings of glory, and in the repose of power meditates fresh flights into the regions of air.

— but to return.

The writings were drawn. The members of the illustrious house were assembled, and the Count exchanged with his affianced bride the ring of alliance.

‘ You have done a rash thing, my Lord Mansfeldt,’ said Lady Clarenstein with a bewitching gaiety assumed to conceal the tender emotions which filled her breast. ‘ You have done a foolish thing. Are you aware what you have signed?’

‘ Aye my sweet Clarens, I have made you my lady and mistress?’

‘ In other words made yourself my lord and master.’

‘ ’Tis one and the same thing, dear lady.’

‘ Oh pardon me, it is very different. But mark me General, I will govern.’

‘ I am content Madame la Générale. I had rather be governed by a woman than by any thing on earth. The Duchess governs the Duke.’

‘ Aye, but I shall not govern as the Duchess does. She loves the Duke.’

‘ And you will love me ?’

‘ She thinks of nothing but how to please the Duke.’

‘ And the Duke is pleased : and so shall I be with all you do and say.’

‘ I fear not.’

‘ Why what will you do ?’

‘ If you are gay, I will be sad. If you are grave, I will chatter like a parrot. If you are angry, I will laugh. If you praise my looks, I will spoil my face with poisonous herbs.’

‘ Nay, my sweet Clarens, I’ll trust you will not do that.’ said the Count archly.

‘ When you are sick, I will have a ball. When you are well and want company, I’ll have the vapours and shut my doors. When you go to the wars, I’ll never think of you, and when you return, I shall have forgot your——name.’

‘ Bless my sweet lady! what a word of trouble she will give herself. She will never do this.’

‘ Trust me I will, and more.’

‘ Aye, but in play.’

‘ Nay, in right earnest, General.’

‘ Then will you hear how I will do in right earnest. When you lighten, I will thunder!

When you smile like an angel, I will swear that
you look like a fury.'

' Ah ! but you will not think so !'

' When I go to the wars, perchance I shall
take a fair mistress with me ; and when I come
back I'll build her a bower as King Henry did
for Fair Rosamund.'

' And then, perchance, I shall poison your fair
Rosamund, as Queen Isabel did.'

' What, then you will be *jealous* ?' cried the
Count passionately.'

' If we marry in this fashion,' said the Countess,
' we had better at once have the treaty dissolved.
I'll call the Duke, and tell him so.'

‘ Not twenty thousand Dukes, with Rhonberg at their head, should take you out of my hands. I’ll marry you, my sweet Clarens, though you turn fiend afterwards.’

There was that night a great assembly, at which the Duchess received the compliments of all the nobility, on the approaching marriage of the Duke’s sister. When the rooms were full, Lady Clarenstein, leaning on the Duke’s arm, passed through them, returning in silence, with a sweetness and composure full of virgin majesty, the salutations which were made to her, as she stayed not to speak to any one. Lord Mansfeldt was standing by the door at which she was to retire. Several gentlemen were near him, with whom he was conversing. She paused a moment to return their salutation, and said to Lord Mans-

feldt, as she passed, ‘Are you obeyed?’ To which he answered only by a rapid glance over her beauteous figure, that dyed her fair cheek with bright carnation, and said, ‘Ever obey me thus—are you going?’

‘You will see me at supper,’ she answered.

The Count opened the door for them, and she curtesying her thanks, cast upon him one of those heavenly smiles which always for five minutes bereft the Count of his reason.

‘Victoria, General,’ cried one of the Cavaliers. ‘You have won the most difficult thing on earth. Pray, if one may ask, what is that in which she has already obeyed you?’

The Count smiled. He did not explain to these Cavaliers the sweet homage which was meant alone for him, and to which the Countess alluded when she asked ‘ If he were obeyed.’ She had in playful gaiety sent for him ere she began her toilette, to ask him how he would chuse his victim should be habited that evening, and he, after a great deal of difficulty to make her understand him, miscalling every part of her dress, which caused them both great diversion, had at length chosen the decorations which adorned her beautiful figure.

Why should so sweet a dream of peace be broken? Why should the cup of joy, at the moment that it touched his lips, be dashed from the hand of Lord Mansfeldt? Strange does it appear, and incredible; and fain would I conceal the

fatal work of pride and passion, which darkened so much happiness, and precipitated the noble and tender Mansfeldt into an abyss of grief and disappointment. But it is fitting that nothing of my heroine's luckless infatuation should be concealed. Love is destined indeed to weed the odious vice of pride from her fair bosom. But there remains another conflict to be endured, whose end is desperate, and all the gay enchantments of Love will vanish, like the famed garden of the Enchantress Armida, when Rinaldo, bursting the ignoble bonds which held in his virtue, shall escape from them and fly. Let me, however, pass over these scenes of dishonor as rapidly as possible. For the conduct of the beauteous Clarenstein, there is no palliation. I abandon her to the vengeance of love, who bends his eyes

to the earth, filled with indignation and confusion.

Thus then it was. The Prince di Bronti, ignorant of nothing that had passed, burnt with rage and malice at the failure of his artifice to separate the Count from Lady Clarenstein. From her coquetry he had been led to hope for its certain success, and with art he had kept back the open declaration of his sentiments, lest that should, in some sort, open her eyes, and create suspicion in her mind that, for the prosecution of his own interests with her, he had violated truth in his accusation of Lord Mansfeldt. Yet even now the Prince did not wholly despair. He had studied the character of Lady Clarenstein; he did not esteem her; and what is there that may not be expected and hoped from a woman whose

ruling passion is the love of power? Besides, the Prince was no common master in the art of working on the follies of the sex: he knew well that the thing in the world which they can least parry, is the weapon of well-pointed ridicule. He knew well by a sneer, a jest, a sarcastic smile, to play upon that pride of the sex which is so delicate, and scrupulous of its honor in affairs of the heart. The Prince was present at the assembly of the Duchess. He had made a profound obeisance to the lovely Clarenstein as she passed. He had thrown into his handsome features an expression of respect, mixed with dejection, that he meant she should observe. She did observe it. Her vanity was gratified by his grieved and disconsolate air. He saw that it was gratified, and an encouraging hope rose in his false bosom. His eye followed her through the rooms.

He scrutinized every movement that she made. He saw the smile which she gave the Count on leaving the room, and he could have struck him dead at his feet from hate and envy. He heard her say that she should not return ; and a thought darted through his mind to seize this hour, when all the family were engaged in the saloon, to see and speak to her.

With this design he glided unperceived through the great hall, and gained the corridor which led to the pavillion in which she resided. He gently closed the doors behind him, and on he went, through several chambers, 'till at length, in a colonnade, filled with sweet-scented plants, he saw her walking up and down, and enjoying the fragrance which the plants emitted. Hearing a step behind her, and thinking that it was that of

the Count, she said aloud, ‘ My dear Lord, this is out of all rule and order!—She turned and saw the Prince, and with great coolness and dignity she enquired of him, if he had ‘ mistaken the way, and wished for his servants.’ The Prince, with an air of well-feigned submission, replied, ‘ Lady Clarenstein, I throw myself on your goodness for pardon for having dared intentionally to penetrate to these apartments. It is indeed out of all rule and order for me now to be here.’

‘ Not more *now* than it ever was.’

‘ Suffer me to speak to you.’

‘ Not here. If your highness has any thing to say to me, I will return to the saloon.’

‘ Not where the Count is. May I perish if I stay where he is ! ’ cried the Prince vehemently.

Lady Clarenstein looked offended.

‘ Be not offended, Madam. The Count hears me not.’

‘ But I do, my Lord. And to be detained here against my will, is an outrage that I shall find it difficult to pardon.’

‘ What have I done to deserve this great severity ? ’ exclaimed the Prince, in a sudden passion of sorrow. ‘ Because the happy Mansfeldt has borne down all before him, why am I, who never in thought offended, to be used so harshly ? ’

‘ Harshly, my Lord?’

‘ Because the tranquil, cool, determined Mansfeldt, has, by his haughty suit and lofty pleadings, made you forget all resentment, why am I to be suspected of the audacious design to outrage you? What have I done to deserve the scorn with which you look at me? Never aught, except that foolish zeal of which once you had proof, and for which now I come to implore your forgiveness.’

‘ What zeal, my Lord?’

‘ Has the noble Clarenstein forgotten?’

The Countess cast down her conscious eye, and the Prince threw himself on his knees with-

out approaching her. ‘Pardon me,’ said he, ‘for this I came. For this I dared to break into your presence.’ Here he paused. He saw that Lady Clarenstein was distressed; and artfully, as if not to behold her confusion, he threw down his false eyes, and proceeded in a low voice. ‘I know that you do, and ever will, hold me in aversion, for having dared to utter aught against him who now stands before the whole Court of Vienna, as your affianced husband. It is in the course of things that I must be the object of your hate, and I shall everlastingly regret my indiscreet enthusiasm, which made me conceive that I was protecting the delicacy of such a lady as yourself from being sullied, as I thought, by unworthy artifice. Fool that I was—officious fool—but forgive me, Madam. My ignorance of the manners of your country, and more, the delicate, and

perhaps extravagant, refinement, which the Italian ladies demand from their suitors, caused me so to err.'

Here again the deceiver paused. He arose, and saw with malicious joy that he had succeeded in rousing the resentful feelings of the Countess.
‘ You, Madam, reap eternal honor in being known to have pardoned so much.’

‘ Who can know that, Prince?’

‘ Every one. The whole world.’

‘ What do they know?’

‘ That you, Madam, deigned to recal the Count.’

‘ Recal him !’ repeated the Countess, blushing.

‘ The Duke your brother, Madam, followed the Count, and brought him back. And this sweet submission on your part is attributed to the influence of the Count’s management—for from you it was not expected.’

‘ Management !’ cried the Countess, indignantly.

Lady Clarenstein saw not through the artifice. His crafty insinuations had all the effect that he could wish, and he saw it. He likewise meant to pique her pride by the coolness with which he behaved in his own person to a woman whom he had once adored. Seeming to consider every

thing as concluded between the Count and herself, his own passion must of course be sacrificed and smothered from respect and deference to her engagements. When, therefore, he found he had sufficiently alarmed her pride, he piqued her self-love by withdrawing from her presence with such profound respect and measured words, such expressions of eternal regret for his indiscretion, and such assurances of henceforth taking every possible care not farther to offend her, that nothing so respectful was ever so provoking. He bowed himself out of her presence with an air of leave-taking that meant never to return, and left her to her reflexions.

One only thought haunted her slumbers that night. One only resolve was the issue of her reflexions. It was the resolution to prove to the

world, and most of all, to the Prince di Bronti, that she could resign the Count, see him depart, and not recal him. Unlucky chance too soon gave her the power to do it, and decide her own destiny. The next morning she was sitting alone with Lord Mansfeldt, when a note was brought to her from the Prince di Bronti. She opened and read it. It contained a request to honor him with her hand at a masked ball, which was held that night at the house of the French ambassador's lady. She gave this note to Lord Mansfeldt. He read it, and returned it without saying a word.

‘What shall I say to the Prince?’

‘Do not ask me, Contessa. I can think but one thing. I can have but one wish.’

‘ What do you wish, my dear Lord?’

‘ To dance with you myself.’

‘ Shall I say that I am engaged to you, then?’
said the touching voice of the perfidious Clarenstein.

‘ I cannot endure,’ cried the Count, ‘ to have
you dance the valtz with the Prince di Bronti.
It makes me shudder to see his insolence.’

‘ What insolence, dear Mansfeldt? The Prince
dances well.’

‘ Oh, excellently well, and particularly the
valtz; and one would think that he imagined
himself created on purpose to dance it with you,

and that your heavenly waist had been rounded only to fit his audacious arm,' continued the Count, muttering to himself.

' Well, then I will say all that to the Prince, shall I ?'

' No, not all,' cried the Count, laughing.

' But that I am to dance to-night with you, or rather walk—for you know that you never dance. You only bend this way and that ; to show your own figure to advantage, I suppose it is. You always look as if you were poising a sylph on your hands, rather than attending to your own dancing.'

‘ You are so light, that one has nothing else to do. Your feet make twenty steps for one of mine.’

‘ I wonder what your august composure is thinking of, all the time that you are moving about in a circle.’

‘ When I dance with you, do you mean?’

‘ Yes.’

‘ I’ll tell you in your ear to-night,’ said the Count in a tone of impassioned gaiety, that silenced the lovely dancer.

She asked the Count therefore to bring her some paper, which he did. She wrote a note to

the Prince, *accepted* his hand, and signed her own destruction.

- That evening the Duke and Duchess, as was often their custom, were in the dressing-room of their beauteous sister, whilst she was making her toilette. Nothing remained to be done, of all her graceful decorations, except some few of the last touches of a parure recherchée. She asked the Duke's opinion in respect to some part of them, in which she was doubtful herself of the effect.

‘Nay,’ cried the Duke, ‘I know not! Mansfeldt’s taste is better than mine. I will, if you please, go and ask him. He is dying of ennui, and without company.’

‘ Nonsense !’ said Lady Clarenstein, ‘ the Count will only laugh at you if you do.’

‘ I’ll see that,’ said the Duke,’ and left the room.

‘ He will bring him here,’ said the Duchess.

‘ I should think not.’

‘ I know by the Duke’s smile when he has mischief in his head.’

‘ But if he has lost all his senses, Lord Mansfeldt has not done the same, I presume.’

‘ We shall see,’ said the Duchess, laughing : and as she spoke, the door opened, and the Duke,

preceding Lord Mansfeldt, entered. The latter threw himself on his knee on the threshold of the door, and said, ‘ I assure you, Contessa, that I *am* shocked at my own audacity. It is the Duke who brought me by force.’

Lady Clarenstein blushed, and smiled, and tried to look at the Duke with anger.

‘ Oh, I can stand your lightning !’ cried the Duke. ‘ Wont you tell Mansfeldt to get up ? ’

‘ Yes, and return whence you brought him ! ’

‘ You hear, Mansfeldt,’ said the Duke. ‘ I said that you ought not to have come.’

‘ Then why did you bring me, Duke ? ’

‘ Oh, I thought Rosamund would like to do a gracious thing to you while it remains in her power.’

‘ It will always be in her power to make me fearful of offending her—now and ever,’ said Lord Mansfeldt.

‘ It is really great boldness, my dear Lord. But since you had the courage to come in, you can perhaps advance a few steps from the door,’ said Lady Clarenstein with an enchanting smile.

‘ Now you are come, Mansfeldt,’ cried the incorrigible Duke, ‘ be of some use. Put this nosegay on for the Countess.’

‘ Indeed, brother, I wonder at you.’

‘ You have my free permission. Here, Mansfeldt, do not stand like a statue. Take this rose unique slightly tinged with the color of Love, like the face, at this moment, of Lady Clarenstein, and these two fleurs-de-lis which are part of your coat of arms. It is a nosegay happily composed for the occasion.’

‘ Contessa mia,’ said the Count, placing the nosegay in her breast, ‘ I beseech you, pardon the Duke. He is absolutely mad to night. He carries every thing with a high hand.’

The Duke gave Lord Mansfeldt some bracelets. The Count took them, and the perfidious Clarenstein exulted when she saw that the Count’s hands trembled as he bound the bracelet on her polished wrist. The scar of that wound, which

once he gave her, was still visible. The Count saw it, and his eye sunk. He colored as he recollect ed the intemperate passion which had so far transported him beyond himself. The Duke took up a pair of sattin slippers, and gave them to the Count, who knelt at her feet, and clasped the emerald clasp.

The Countess smiled, and said, as Lord Mansfeldt finished, ‘Thank you. It is too low an office for so noble a hand.’

‘“Thank you” . . . yes, indeed, I think so,’ cried the Duke; ‘after so many services, it is little enough of thanks.’ The Duke had mischief in his eye; he looked at the Count, who shook his head, while his eyes brightened with such a lustre that the Countess, suspicious of the Duke’s intention, attempted to rise. The Duke prevented

her, saying in a whisper, ‘ Per tutte quelle tenere omaggie, un’ solo bacio accorda, Germana, al nobil servitore.’

‘ For shame, Duke,’ exclaimed Hermione.

‘ Hermione,’ said the Duke, ‘ you sit there like a sage censor. I wish that you would not at the age of twenty, adopt the manners of an old woman of fourscore. I hate those matronly grimaces. If you say another word, I shall attack you in some way or other. Rosamund, if you want a veil to conceal your not being angry with me, there is your mask.’

Lady Rosamund went to the Duchess, who said ‘ Let us go, while the Duke has an idea of propriety left.’

Oh noble and tender Mansfeldt, how wert thou cheated and betrayed! Full of confidence and hope and gratitude, the noble soldier followed his perfidious mistress' steps to the ball-room. Every eye was on the noble company when it entered, and not more did they rest on the beauteous Clarenstein than on her happy lover. Never had he appeared in public, so high-spirited, so full of nobleness and that strong firm grace befitting the mien of Man. His heart seemed in joyous measure to bound beneath the thick embroidery which covered his breast. On his fine forehead lay

‘ A knot of raven hair
Wrapped in curls as fierce Achilles was ;
On which the breath of heaven delights to play,
Making it dance with wanton majesty.’

The ungentle Clarenstein often fixed her proud eye on him ; approved, and gloried in beholding him, as he ever sought occasion to do, cast on her those little honors which are given women in public, with that tranquil, noble, and impassioned air, so peculiarly his own. How often did he bend his noble head towards her. How often did he smile an answer to what she said ; and ever, in courteous attendance, kept his station near her, brooding as it were, over his future destiny.

In sommo contento,

In alta e tranquilla pace.

Such was the man on whom the young Countess now prepared to throw a never-to-be-forgiven stain of perjury and contempt. Determined she

was, but not unappalled ; and though she set her happiness on the cast of a die, she did it in trembling anxiety.

The Duke had quitted the party of the Duchess : Lord Mansfeldt had remained for a moment, to speak to some persons who addressed him, and was at a distant part of the room, when, the music being heard, he bowed hastily to those who had detained him, and went to claim that hand so treacherously promised to the Prince di Bronti.

The Duchess was standing at the upper end of the room with several other ladies ; and many gentlemen also with them. The haughty Clarenstein smiled to see that what she meant to do would be seen by a hundred persons, whom she considered as so many witnesses of her own

revenge and the Count's discomfiture. At length, she saw him advance to claim her hand. Her heart beat a little with apprehension. He came up to her. All the gentlemen made way for him. He lightly touched her hand. She withdrew it. 'Will you not dance?' he said, with some surprise. She looked at the Prince, and they both smiled. The Count stood as if thunder-struck, and the color rose in his face. 'Lady Clarenstein,' said he emphatically, and with a tone of more authority than he had used before he took her hand. A second time she withdrew it, and again she looked at the Prince, and as the dance was forming, she gave him gaily her other hand, and they moved on. The noble and injured lover started, as if his whole frame had felt the insult. The gentlemen looked at one another, and not one of them was there that did not

secretly, and some openly, murmur out their disapprobation. The Duchess shocked beyond all expression, alarmed at the fire which flashed from the Count's eyes, laid her hand gently on his arm, and said, ‘ My noble friend . . . disturb not yourself . . . Let them go . . . ?’ The Count replied, ‘ Trust me, I will be calm. But the hand of an angel could not stay me.’ So saying, he softly displaced the hand of Hermione, and darting forwards, came up with his betrothed bride and her dainty paramour. ‘ Lady Clarenstein,’ cried he, in a tone of suppressed agony, ‘ Is it possible that you can mean to do this?’

She smiled, and answered, ‘ If you allude to my dancing with the Prince di Bronti, I certainly do.’

‘ For the love of heaven, and your own honor, do not do it. You know not the effect that it will produce in me.’

‘ Oh yes I do !’ She scornfully said : ‘ I see it already.’

‘ You dishonor *yourself* in casting this insult on me . . . pray, be advised . . . pray, beware.’

‘ Beware ! Of what ?’

If ever an eye expressed the mighty meaning of the soul, the Count’s then did. Now the Prince saw the effect which this look produced on Lady Clarenstein—he saw her change color, and he felt her hand tremble in his. ‘ My Lord,’ cried he, ‘ you detain the Countess.’ The Count

heard him not. He saw the conflict in her breast, and again he pressed her arm, ‘Let truth,’ he cried, ‘Let delicacy conquer. Do not dance the Valtz with the Prince. Let me explain to him.’

The Count paused. ‘Now to yield,’ thought she, ‘would be cowardice, mean submission. That voice would win my soul from heaven! but now to retreat . . . o, no . . . they would say again that they had duped me.’ The bad angel conquered, and all was lost. ‘Unhand me, my lord,’ she cried. ‘Explain to the Prince! what? that which he knows already, that he is——preferred, she would have said; but the word was not pronounced. It seemed as if her voice had not the power to utter at once so great a falsehood and so great an insult.

The Count saw them depart. They took their place amongst the dancers. He saw the perfidious Clarenstein throw her hand delicately on the Prince's shoulder, and the Valtz began, Slowly at first, *con una grazia altera*, they balanced, and poised their well-assorted figures : they rounded with exquisite precision the bewitching circle. Her fine foot, firmly planted on the ground, marked the measure, and though her movements were flexible and yielding as the sportive zephyrs, yet was there that chastened and composed reserve which gave delicacy and dignity even to such a dance. So far, all was well. So graceful and so noble in the dance had the Count often beheld her. But soon the measure quickened, and so did the pulses of his bursting heart. They traversed the hall as if uplifted by inspiration of the thrilling music. Their steps

were not heard on the floor. The Count shuddered with indignation to see the passionate animation which rose at every circle in the Prince's eye, while the fair dancer, not unobservant of it, with nice precaution bent back her fine form against the Prince's arm. The Count, not to see it, averted his eye. He moved away; again he turned and looked. He saw her feet entangled in an embroidered sash which, untwisted from her waist, had fallen at her feet. The sudden shock threw her on the Prince's shoulder. She recovered herself. The Prince snatched up the ribbon, and tied it round his waist. The Count uttered a groan of mingled fury and despair. He felt some one touch him, he heard some one speak. He turned his head, and saw the gentle and feeling Hermione. But he heard not what she said. He only looked at her, and his eyes

rapidly saw the object of their fatal fascination. So exquisite was the dance, that the assembly murmured applause. The wife of Lord Mansfeldt, the betrothed bride of the delicate, the austere Mansfeldt, applauded like a dancer! ‘Come away;’ said the Duchess, ‘they are passing this way. They must inevitably pass you. Do not expose yourself to fresh insult.’ The Count heard her not. Now it was not the intention of the unfeeling Clarenstein to pass the Count. She wished to avoid him. But the Prince saw where he stood, and resolved to take that direction, and Lady Clarenstein yielded to the influence which he had on her steps. On she came, with a softened and lengthened step. She smiled on the Prince, and she seemed now to rest on his arm with a delicate and dainty languor, and she passed so near the Count, that the sash

which waved round the Prince flapped in his face. The Count started back. He stamped with fury on the floor, and instantly a smothered laugh broke from the lips of the sorceress. They then disappeared through the columns which separated the saloon from an inward one. ‘It is ill done by heaven!’ exclaimed two or three gentlemen at once. ‘It is most infamously done! by all that is sacred, I would not forgive her if I were Mansfeldt, though she lay dead at my feet.’ ‘She deserves to be stabbed,’ said another cavalier. ‘Such a fine fellow as that, to be made a sneer and a jest of, by such a heartless piece of beautiful devilry.’

This, and much more, was said on all sides by the company present. All seemed to feel the insult offered to so noble and exalted a character.

Even those who were not privileged to call themselves his friends, joined in the general indignation which her conduct had excited. But none of this met her ear, nor that of the Count. When they had retired, he had followed them, but not 'till after he had pressed the hand of the anxious Hermione, and said 'you may trust me. I will do nothing that shall alarm you.'

The first chamber into which the Count passed was occupied by several parties of dancers. He went on into another. That was empty. He saw not them he sought, but he heard their voices in a viranda which was open to the air, and but mildly illuminated. Here the Count paused. An arcade of the viranda concealed him from view. He saw the Prince on the ground before the feet of Lady Clarenstein. He heard him a

thousand times pantingly breathe forth her name, and as often cry ‘a me sarà, a me, quella diletta mano. Sarai di Bronti Principessa e sposa. Non è vero, Illustrissima?’

Lady Clarenstein only laughed at this impassioned language. She demanded back the ribband which he wore. The Prince hesitated. There seemed to be a contest, and conditions proposed on his part. At length, the Count heard him say in a sneering tone, ‘how happy would the melancholy Count be to do this,’ and the Prince with these words bound the ribband round her waist. ‘Mon Prince?’ said the Countess, ‘have the goodness to get me some ice. It is a suffocating heat.’

The Prince departed, and then the Count stood before her. She started ; and would have rushed past him, but he planted himself before the entrance, and thus prevented her. He held her arm. But not now, as before, did rage and despair come like thunder from his bosom. He was calm, silent. He fixed upon her an eye that seemed to pierce into her very inmost soul. He sighed, as if his heart were broken, and let her arm fall. Then he drew from his finger the ring of alliance, and held it to her. She took it, and said, ‘I am to understand that all is at an end between us.’ The Count bent his head. ‘Be it so,’ she answered. ‘Do your pleasure, sir. I no doubt can live though Lord Mansfeldt should cease to love.’

The bitter taunt touched not the noble Mansfeldt. Rather did it recoil on her own breast, and her heart beat to suffocation. She saw him move from her a few steps ; then turn, and with such an air of desolate grandeur, such a quiet agony of renunciation ! . . . heaving forth a sigh whose lengthened sound was distinctly heard like the last moan of the breeze. Then all was silent as death. The voice of the Prince was heard ; the Count had vanished !

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

I SHALL not pretend to pourtray the scene which passed that night at the Hôtel de Rhonberg, nor the confusion and disorder which prevailed the succeeding day. Lady Clarenstein, in sullen pride, awaited the issue of the storm which she had herself caused to reign in her family. She fondly presumed that the Count's passion for her would never suffer him to complete that

renunciation of her hand which he had made the preceding evening, and every time the door opened, she expected that it was to bring her a letter or message from him. But she waited in vain—no intelligence came. ‘Another such trial, and no art can recal him.’ Thus the Duke had declared. But Lady Rosamund firmly believed that, without art or concession on her part, the Count would of himself return. Irrevocably to pronounce farewell, she thought, would be to him as great a sacrifice as to give up life itself. From the magnitude of the sacrifice, she thought herself secure of its not being made. In this last point she deceived herself. She had much to learn, and much to suffer.

Thus the day was spent. In the evening, the Duchess and Lady Clarenstein were alone in the

saloon. The Duke was out. *Where*, the Countess did not *descend* to inform herself, but she conjectured that he remained with Lord Mansfeldt. She took her harp and played, to avoid conversation, and to keep up the frivolous and unworthy affectation of the haughty, though difficultly maintained, indifference which she chose to assume. The Duchess sat reading, or rather meditating on the cruel situation of her family, when Bertrand came in, and with an air of disorder which he could not conceal, presented to the Duchess a letter.

‘What is the matter, Bertrand?’ said she with alarm. ‘The Duke is well?’

‘Ah, que si, Madame, le bon Dieu soit béní! C'est ce brave Seigneur qui est blessé.’

‘Blessé,’ exclaimed the Duchess. ‘Qui donc?’

‘M. le Comte—Mais pardon. Cette lettre sans doute instruira Madame.’

Bertrand left the saloon; and the Duchess, tearing open the letter in an extreme anxiety, read as follows :

‘Lest report should reach you, and misrepresent or magnify the circumstance which has happened, I write, my best Hermione, a few lines, while the wound of Mansfeldt is dressing. He is hurt in the shoulder; but, blessed be God, not dangerously. He has fought the Prince di Bronti. I cannot now relate the particulars. The honor of our house is sullied. I was not present at the scene. I was sent for to the field

after the duel was fought, or never with my consent, or while I had a drop of blood in these veins, should the noble Mansfeldt have risked his life to vindicate the faded honor of the Countess of Clarenstein. The Prince is slightly wounded. The occasion of this affair was some words which fell from him in presence of the Count, that the latter esteemed a false and injurious aspersion of that lady's conduct. I will see you to-morrow early : 'till then, my best Hermione, I am your faithful

RHONBERG.'

' Oh the noble Mansfeldt ! Oh the heart of truth and honor !' cried the Duchess, clasping her hands together.

Lady Rosamund had ceased to play, and now came, and taking the letter out of the unresisting hand of Hermione, she read, and her haughty soul sickened as she traced the lines, and all her sullen pride was fallen !

‘ My name traduced ! become the theme of lawless broils !—How ! In what manner ? The honor of our house tarnished by me !’

Now, for the first time, Lady Rosamund felt keenly sensible that the public means which she had taken to revenge on the Count, what she esteemed an injury to her honor, had, in effect, authorised suspicions with regard to that chaste reserve which she had, in the midst of all her follies, preserved unstained even by the breath of slander. Stung to the soul by this conviction,

which now flashed on her mind, the haughty Rosamund felt the first-fruits of that sorrow which was soon to darken and confound her.

The circumstances of the duel were as follows. Lord Mansfeldt, when the Duke left him for a few hours, went out uncertain, and little caring whither he directed his steps. As he passed through the Park, he saw, not far from him, the Prince di Bronti, surrounded by a group of gentlemen. Wishing to avoid him, he turned away, but as he passed, he heard the name of Rosamund pronounced several times by the Prince in a tone that made the high blood of the injured Mansfeldt tremble in his veins. So he went up, and mixed amongst the gentlemen, and when again the Prince, with lawless and most audacious freedom, insinuated that the Countess had shown marks of

favor to himself, unworthy of a chaste and noble lady to grant, the Count fixed his large eye upon him and said, ‘ It is *impossible*. Your highness is mistaken.’

The Prince repeated what he had already advanced. The Count, more firmly than before, denied his assertion, and insisted on the words being retracted. The Prince refused, and added words of personal scorn and raillery to the Count, for his own failure to gain that of which he envied him the possession. The Count replied, ‘ I have no personal interest in vindicating the delicacy of the Countess of Clarenstein’s honor, but whatever are my wrongs, I will never, with impunity, suffer her name, in my hearing, to be mentioned otherwise than as it deserves to be, with that delicacy and full acknowledgment of its

unsullied purity that I, from my soul, believe her to possess.'

The Prince frowned, and little more than passed. The Prince swore that he would never retract a word of what he had said, and the Count then significantly touched his sword.

'When and where,' said the Prince fiercely.]

The Count replied in a whisper, naming a retired spot, and at the lapse of two hours. The Prince retired, and those of his party followed him; but some there were who, in silent admiration having witnessed the preceding scene, now expressed themselves in bitter indignation and regret. The conduct of the Countess had so weakened her reputation, and so diminished the

high honor in which she had been held, that not one of the Count's friends could endure the thought of his sacrificing his life to vindicate it. But the noble Mansfeldt heard their representations in calm and fixed resolve. He was not careless of life, but he felt no ardent desire to live that should make him fear to die. There was valor in his arm, and virtue in his breast, and a conscience void of offence; and more than this, there was at his heart a biting anguish which drank his vital blood; and evermore a mournful cry was heard within him, a desolate and a withering cry, which seemed to say, ' thou art in the world alone.'

' Dear General,' cried a young officer who was in the Count's regiment, ' I do suppose that on no consideration you would take my sword. The

death of such a sorry fellow as myself would be no loss to the state, and I should shout for joy in heaven to have lost my life for you.'

' No,' said the General, ' the state can never have too many such sorry fellows as you in her service. You are young, and have much to enjoy with that honest heart of yours.'

' Why, as to my youth, my noble General, I do suppose that you are not five years older than myself, and you ought to live for the self-same reason.'

The Count sighed heavily. Now the appointed time drew near ; and the Count, attended by two of his friends, one of them the young officer, after bidding farewell to the others, his manly

heart softened at their honest affection, proceeded to that secluded spot in the park where he had agreed to meet the Prince. Here, for a few moments, he stood apart, uncovered his head, and folding his hands on his breast, he seemed to withdraw into himself. The Count came, not with that daring and audacious rashness, mis-called courage, to the field of combat; but like a man who has balanced the good with the evil, well weighed the value of life, and who braves the peril to which he exposes it in a good cause, with that confidence which results from unblemished honor and an unspotted life. When he raised his head from its lowly posture, and lifted to heaven an eye where beamed sweetness in the midst of anguish, and in which earthly feelings strove with those which were heavenly, it was like the worship of an Archangel before the throne of

heaven. These moments passed, he took his pocket-book, and wrote on a blank leaf some hasty lines, then joined his friends, and addressed the young officer. ‘ My dear Stralzein, if I fall in this encounter, take my sword, and this ribband, and lay them at the feet of the Emperor, with my humble duty. This paper, which you will find about me, carry to the Duke of Rhonberg.’ The officer bowed, and promised to perform the Count’s commands. He grasped the Count’s hands, and kissed them several times with tears.

‘ Enough, enough,’ cried the Count. ‘ God bless you, Stralzein—no more of this.’

‘ For such a peevish scrap of beauty,’ muttered the young soldier, ‘ to endanger his precious life !’

Soon after, the Prince and his friends came on the ground. The combat was to be with swords, and they took their stations in silence. The Prince drew out his blade, and with a ferocious gesture struck it on the ground, and bent it several times, as if to try the goodness of the steel. The hand of the Count was on his sword, but it was yet in the scabbard, when he spoke thus to his antagonist. ‘Prince, my trade is war; and many a time have I unsheathed my sword, panting for battle, but I thirst not for your blood. I have no personal enmity against you, nor to my knowledge have you injured me.’

The Prince colored high, and seemed greatly agitated; but he listened in sullen silence.

‘ I know you to be brave. Does it become you to expose yourself to death for a rash word? Recal it, and this sword is sheathed!’

The Prince made a sign of furious defiance.

‘ Then,’ cried the Count in a loud voice, ‘ defend yourself, and let heaven decide! *This* to revenge an infamous slander !’

They fought. The Prince’s sword pierced the Count’s shoulder: but still he fought, ’till the Prince fell, being wounded in the sword-arm, and having, besides, other wounds. The Count, with a grasp of giant strength, held him down, and pointed his weapon to his breast, calling aloud to him to retract his slanderous aspersions on the Countess of Clarenstein; or receive his death-

stroke. The Prince, faint and breathless, strove to speak, but most fortunate was it for him that a sudden faintness bereft him of the power of utterance, for a furious imprecation was ready to issue from his lips. Seeing that he was speechless, the seconds interposed. The Prince was carried off the ground in a state of insensibility.

The Duke of Rhonberg having heard a rumor of the intended duel, flew to the quarter, and arrived at the moment that the Count, supporting himself against a tree, was, with the assistance of his friends, staunching the blood from his wound, which, though deep, was not in a vital part.

Such was the issue of this duel, which covered the Prince di Bronti with shame, the Count with

honor, and the whole house of Rhonberg with affliction; casting on them at the same time an everlasting weight of gratitude. This was the account given to Lady Rosamund by the Duchess the following morning. She also saw the lines written by the Count to her brother. To describe the state of her mind is impossible. She shuddered at the danger which she had run, and sickened with mortification at her slandered fame. The haughty Clarenstein bowed her forehead in the dust in sullen humiliation. The Duke refused to see her. The Count made no application to her. He seemed already to have ceased to exist for her. She was abandoned; given up alone to herself, to find courage to bear the evils which she had brought on herself. Small was that courage: nay, the force which sustained her could not be called courage; for that is the beau-

tiful offspring of patience, and right endurance, and confidence, and hope, but this was an arid, desperate force, which came from despair. Confounded, thunderstruck, she seemed yet but half to know and have considered the extent of the evil which she had caused; and every hour opened, with fresh intelligence, a new light into the gloomy prospect. Thus, by degrees, a keener sense of feeling came on her; and, drop by drop, she drank the bitter gall of that cup, into which her own mad hand had poured the poison.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

BUT short was the time which remained for the endurance of suspense, and the scene was near its close. The Duchess frequently visited Lord Mansfeldt in his illness, and it was understood by all those who visited at the Hôtel de Rhonberg, that the noble family wished to remain in undisturbed seclusion. This profound quiet, prevailing in all the spacious apartments, where usually the song, the laugh, and all the

gay pomp of life, were heard and seen, rendered the palace, to the palsied feelings of Lady Clarenstein, a magnificent tomb, in which her joy and happiness were for ever buried.

Often she wandered through the deserted chambers, starting at every sound ; dreading at every step to behold the Duke, whose alienated affection hung over her mind like a dark and heavy cloud.

Lady Rosamund was young : she had never suffered. She was not of that lofty and independent disposition which can stand in the world alone. Never was there a woman to whom protection was more indispensable. But now, in vain she waited for a word of comfort. She wept, but no hand dried her falling tears. She called

on the name of the Duke, but no one came. The excess of her grief cheated her into a belief that it was known, and understood, and pitied by her friends; and that relief must come at length. But each successive paroxysm of grief rose and declined, attained its height of agony, and was succeeded by a heavy listlessness and languor—and still she was alone. Still all was silent and desolate around. Oh, how insupportable is the discipline of grief to a proud, and prosperous mind! How strange does it appear to call for sympathy, and to be unanswered!

Once as she wandered in the great saloon in the dusk of the evening, her fine hair, wet with tears, lying in disorder on her breast, her hands clasped over her bosom, and her eyes half blinded with weeping, she heard a door unclose behind

her. It was nearly dark; and, believing that the Duke was from home, she raised her eye without, as usual, attempting to escape. She did not recognise him, 'till coming nearer she saw that it was the Duke who took from a cabinet a packet of sealed papers. He turned to go back; saw her, and started. Without moving from the spot where she stood, Lady Clarenstein sunk on her knees. The Duke like lightning darted through the door. His sister arose. Her heart was breaking. She fled to her apartments; and imprisoned there for many days, she passed not the threshold of her door, 'lest again I behold,' she cried, 'my brother's eye.'

Now it had been the intention of Lord Mansfeldt, on the utter confusion of all his hopes, to retire for a time from Vienna, and with this

design he waited only 'till he should be able to go out, that he might solicit the emperor's leave to travel. In this conjuncture a circumstance happened, which gave him an honorable and noble means of absenting himself from his country.

Affairs of state of a most difficult nature, rendered it necessary to send an embassy to the court of——. In a few days, it was to leave Vienna, when the sudden death of the nobleman to whom the charge had been given, rendered the office vacant. The Count threw himself at the feet of the Emperor, offered his services, and was instantly accepted. He received his instructions; and was honored by expressions of trust, and assurances of confidence in the greatness of his abilities from the lips of his sovereign. These

the Count swore to merit with all the exertion that he could make of his talents for the service of his master. In the midst of personal anguish and grief which corroded his life, the Count could, for the service of his country, abstract his mind from the fierce dominion of disappointed love, that cruel passion which enervates alike the hero and the peasant.

No delight, no joy, not even the throne of the universe, could have power to charm his soul, or lull his wounded spirit to peace and pleasure: but duty had over that magnanimous heart a sovereign power which could make him quell all the stormy passions into order; and if not eradicate them from his soul, could at least so restrain and subdue them, that they confounded not his judgment, nor impeded the exertion of his noble

faculties. Back within the sacred recesses of his heart he sent that fatal sensibility which in a mind less firm and less virtuous, would have perchance maddened his reason and consumed his life.

‘I understand,’ said the Emperor with kindness, ‘that your marriage with the Duke of Rhonberg’s sister is broken.’

The Count bowed: a faint color strove for mastery with the deadly paleness of his fine countenance.

‘Forget her,’ said the Emperor. ‘That lady, as I have reason to think, is not worthy of the first gentleman in my dominions. If you desire alliance hereafter, choose where you will. If

honors, wealth, dignity, ask of me what you will.'

The Count knelt, and kissed his sovereign's hand. He said with firmness, ' All that I now ask of heaven, is to serve your majesty ; to receive the marks of your royal favor when deserved, will give to my soul some of its wonted fire.'

' Brave heart !' exclaimed the Emperor, ' the lady who could cast such a pearl away is, in my opinion, little to be regretted. Forget her my Lord. Women are fair pageants who much adorn the triumphs of life, but they are impediments in the path of glory. You will be ready to set out to-morrow ?'

The Count signified his obedience, took leave of the Emperor, and instantly prepared to leave Vienna. The suite of the late ambassador was assigned to him, with permission to make what additions he thought proper of his own people. These arrangements being made, the whole retinue set out from Vienna the following morning, and were directed to await the arrival of Lord Mansfeldt at a certain distance from the city. He was to set out on the evening of the same day with the Duke of Rhonberg, whose intention it was to attend the Count some days' journey.

Evening came, and the Duchess sat alone in the saloon awaiting the arrival of the Duke and Lord Mansfeldt, who were to depart from the Hôtel de Rhonberg at nine o'clock.

At length they came. The Count seated himself by the Duchess ; thanked her a thousand times for all her goodness to him ; said a thousand times, ‘ farewell,’ and often with respectful affection pressed her hand to his lips. The Duchess wept. Broken and disjointed sentences were alone heard between them, ’till at length the Duke came up, and laying his hand on the Count’s shoulder, said, ‘ Why should we linger : bid farewell to the Duchess. Let us depart.’ The Duchess threw herself into the arms of the Duke, when Lord Mansfeldt suddenly rose, and in an agitation which he could no longer conceal, he paced the saloon ; and at length, in a low and inward voice, said to the Duke, ‘ I wish to see the Countess.’

The Duke started, and exclaimed, 'See her, Mansfeldt !'

' It is my last desire. Rhonberg, I do request it of your kindness, your friendship !'

' Ah, use not such language to me !' cried the Duke. ' Command me and all that I possess. Most assuredly you shall see her. My best Hermione, where is the Countess ?'

' Not half an hour is passed since I left her alone in her chamber.'

' Go then, Mansfeldt,' said the Duke.

Lord Mansfeldt turned to go, when the tender Hermione laid her hand on his arm, and said,

‘ You will bear in mind, Lord Mansfeldt, that Lady Clarenstein has not been well of late, and that even in justice there is a mercy to be shown to a fallen enemy.’

‘ Gentlest lady,’ cried the Count, ‘ these lips can never cast bitter words on a suffering woman;’ and he left the room.

Now the young Countess was in her chamber. The lights were burnt low and dim, and she sat nearly in motionless despair, her head supported on her hands which rested on a table that stood before her. She raised not her eye when the door unclosed. Absorbed, and careless of all that passed around her, she heard some one enter, and moved not, ’till the slow and powerful step of Lord Mansfeldt, so well known to her ear,

caused her at length to lift up her head. Her eyes, dimmed with sorrow, belieyed that they saw his ghost ; so pale he was, haggard and emaciated in form. One arm was slung in a black handkerchief, and he stood before her so still and motionless, with a countenance so full of sorrow, and so unmixed with any of the stormy passions of this world, that she did verily believe that it was his shade, and chill terror deprived her of speech or action. Oh how he gazed on her ! how heavily he sighed as he lifted off his aching brow, the thick clusters of his raven hair ! his eyes were without brightness ; and their slow, lingering, and oft retiring glances, were like the unearthly gaze of a spirit !

But at length he moved. He came on the opposite side of the table, and untying with the

only hand which he could use, a ribband round his neck, he took her picture, and laid it before him on the table. He took from his breast a packet of letters and billets which he had, on different occasions, received from her. He bared his arm, and unclasped from it a rich bracelet of her hair. All these several gifts he laid before her, and sighed as if his heart were broken. Yet another letter he drew from his bosom, and laid it directly beneath her eye. It was addressed to the ‘Countess of Clarenstein.’

This done, he seemed to suffer great conflict. His courage in some measure failed him. He traversed the room with hasty strides, and the mighty power of love contended with his soul. Often he raised his hand to heaven, implored its aid, and groaned aloud. But soon the passion

subsided—the agony was past—his force returned. He approached her. Now she had on her head a veil, which, though thin, in some measure hid her features from his view. This, with a trembling and a gentle hand, he lifted up, gazed on her matchless face with a look of such ineffable tenderness, such placable and yet such agonized feeling, as might have well become the pure spirit of an angel. He let the veil fall again, and said in a low voice, ‘Pray give me your hand.’ She gave it to him. She felt a convulsive kiss upon it. He carried it to his eyes, and pressed it with force against them, and she felt the pulses of his beating temples, and from beneath his closed lids shot suddenly drops of burning anguish, which flowed over all her hand. She heard him inarticulately murmur as he let it fall, ‘no more in this world!’ then rousing all his

virtue, and commanding back to his soul his unutterable anguish, he, with distinctive firmness, pronounced these words, ‘ If ever, as in the chance of fortune all is possible, you should want a friend, remember Mansfeldt ! ’

Lady Clarenstein bowed her head between her hands, and when again she raised it, the Count was gone !

A moment after, she heard the carriage pass the gates. She uttered a loud cry, and rushed to the door. ‘ Stay ; though you curse me ! ’ she cried. Nature could endure no more : and she fell senseless in the arms of the grieved Hermione. The letter which Lord Mansfeldt had left for the Countess, contained these lines.

'Countess of Clarenstein, I came not here to reproach you for that which has passed between us. The blame lies on me, for I was warned of the danger which I ran, and rashly plunged into a sea of love, madness and destruction. Now there is shipwreck of all my hopes. I mean not in the language of betrayed love to call up before you the memory of your broken vows. You may ignorantly have done this mighty mischief, for you may not have been aware of the fatal force of my love, nor have known to what extent your actions wrought confusion in me. But be that as it may, whether rashly, or deliberately, you have acted, the deed is done, and the injury incurable. Your shame would be no joy to me, nor your sorrow bring me aught of reparation. I shudder in consternation at the power which you have on my soul, and to preserve

myself undishonored, undisgraced, I must destroy it for ever.'

' My youth was passed in affliction and toil. I never knew the softening tenderness of life. When I first saw you, my soul was strong within herself. The powers of my mind were high-toned, and firm. My will was the servant of my reason. To preserve these I fly from the reach of your influence, for already you have bereaved me of that vigor which made endurance easy. My soul is saddened and my spirit broken; and my rebel heart shrinks from labor and lofty deeds. My imagination dwells near thee, the soft enervating delicacies which surround thee, depress the noble ardor of my nature, and poison all my virtues. I break from you. I go into the world afresh with what remains I have of courage and of

virtue . . . dark is the future, and desolate the earth !

‘ It was folly to think that we ever could be united. Your wondrous beauty charmed my senses. The joys of heaven came on my sight. I grasped them and they fled. I have loved you as no man ever loved woman, and this you know. I would have granted much of indulgence to your sex’s love of admiration, and to your own peculiar character, every thing that without dishonor could be granted. But never will I give the noble name I bear to her who could in cool and deliberate levity sully the purity of her own, though but in thought.

‘ Be happy, madam—I wish it, and I forgive you. You are young. Life smiles upon you.

You may love. A Prince perhaps may bind his coronet on your brow. In the world we no doubt shall meet again. Nay, it may be, that there shall pass between us the interchange of fair seeming words and courteous actions. Let then no word, or look, or sign be given that ever we were to each other affianced and betrothed. When you shall see me hereafter engaged in business, acting the part assigned me by heaven to perform, you may think perchance that peace has revisited this bosom, and that projects of high advancement (for you know me to have a lofty mind) occupy and fill my soul. If then an upbraiding thought should chill the warm blood which flows so proudly in those veins, and you, with some returns of former kindness, should seek to know how Mansfeldt fares, how life passes for him . . . then, and not 'till then, dare to lift

your false eyes to mine! you will read there a
tale which will trouble your proud bosom, and
scare your fluttering joys! but what do I say?
. . . why do I rave and menace? . . . do I wish
to trouble that breast? rather may never a sigh,
a tear avenge me! it is done, I am silent for
ever!

MANSFELDT?

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

UTTER despair now took possession of the faculties of Lady Clarenstein, and for several succeeding days she lay half senseless on the couch. She took the nourishment, and whatever else they presented to her, with an unresisting and passive calm; but sleep never closed her eyes, and she gave scarcely other sign of existence than deep-drawn sighs, and now and then drawing the letter of Lord Mansfeldt from

her bosom, she would read, and replace it. The Duchess would have given the world to have seen her weep, or to have heard her utter lamentations. This tranquil grief terrified the Duchess, and she left no means untried to rouse her from it. Sometimes, as with tender anxiety she pressed Lady Clarenstein's chill hand, she would give her one of those woeful smiles of grateful feeling, which dissolved the gentle Hermione into tears of deep compassion; sometimes she deliberated with herself, whether or not to call in the aid of her physician, but the delicate and sensible Hermione wished, if possible, to avoid so public a disclosure of the state of Lady Clarenstein's mind.

One day that she was reflecting while alone in her apartment, on the melancholy state of her

family, her eye fell on a picture of Lord Mansfeldt, which had been intended by him as a nuptial gift to the Countess. She had never seen it, as it had been sent home the day after the marriage had been dissolved. It was done after that design she had herself made of the Count in the grove of the Faun, and was meant to convey a delicate homage of his love.

It was a master piece of painting. It represented the Count on horseback ascending a height: he was in the act of checking the courser's eager fire, which throwing the animal back on its haunches, presented the idea of an equestrian statue. The right arm of the rider was elevated, and seemed to point out to the eye of his troops, some object at a distance which already that fine and powerful hand seemed

to grasp. So Hannibal on the summit of the Alps, showed to the Carthaginians the fair fields of Italy. There was a wild and pensive grandeur in the surrounding scenery. Such Salvator Rosa would have chosen. A cloak was thrown over the Count, which was agitated by the wind. The head, on which the painter had exhausted all his art, was not only a striking resemblance of the Count's features, but the painter had also, as if fired by inspiration, caught that sweet and pensive smile, and blended it with that look of bright intelligence, which, in its vast designs, seemed to penetrate into ages yet unborn. He had drawn those awful brows which overshadowed the clear black eye, the dark mustachios giving martial spirit to the finest mouth ever seen in Grecian sculpture, from which the powerful voice seemed to issue, and

you almost listened to hear the loud sounds of warlike command. Now as the Duchess looked on this, the very image of the Count, a thought came into her mind, that the sight of it might perhaps turn the force of Lady Clarenstein's grief into a gentler channel. She imparted her design to her women, and they approving, the Duchess commanded them to place the picture, the next morning, opposite to the couch on which Lady Clarenstein lay. This was accordingly done. In the morning when Lady Clarenstein, after a sleepless night, drew her slow and lingering steps from her bed to the couch, on which like a senseless statue she had lain for many days, she at a distance saw this picture covered with a scarlet mantle. Surprised, she turned her faint eye on the Duchess, who smiled, and tenderly pressed her hand, ‘ Oh,’ cried she,

‘ if you knew what pain it is to me to see you thus !’ There the Duchess paused, drew near the picture, and lifted up the mantle. She shrunk back on the cushion, and covered her eyes. The Duchess retired out of her immediate view, but watched with intense anxiety what she would do. At length, Lady Clarenstein took her hands from her eyes, and gazed on the picture for a considerable time in breathless attention. Her bosom began to heave, her frame was slightly agitated ; a faint and transient color fled over her face. Suddenly she rose, and wrapping her robes round her now feeble and bending figure, she walked up to it, and placing her hand over the face, she cried aloud, ‘ Lord of my life, look not with those eyes upon me !’ Instantly she broke into a violent passion of tears, and shrunk all trembling into the bosom of the Duchess, who, affected,

yet delighted to witness the strong emotion, blessed heaven for the change.

Such was the effect of this tender stratagem, and from this hour the grief of the Countess relaxed into something of a more gentle nature : the torment became less fierce, and admitted of more alleviation. She wept incessantly, endured all the sad variety of pain, but the Duchess no longer feared for her reason, or for the extinction of her life.

This was the relation which Hermione gave to the Duke in her letters. He was struck with concern, and somewhat surprised at this excess of feeling, of which he did not believe his sister's nature to be capable. His generous heart was grieved to think that she possessed such a capa-

city for suffering. He a little reproached himself for having flown from her that night, when her lowly posture seemed at once to dread and deprecate his resentment. But whatever concern the Duke felt, he neither imparted that nor his sister's situation to Count Mansfeldt. He deemed it to be a principle of honor, not to work on his feelings by such a recital.

When therefore he wrote to the Duchess, he spoke only in general terms of Lord Mansfeldt, and concluded with these words; ‘ say to Rosamund, that I return to her as a brother and friend, that from my lips she need apprehend no reproaches, but I request that the name of Mansfeldt never be mentioned between us, nor aught of allusion be made to him.—Let everlasting silence and oblivion cover the mighty mischief

done to him, and let us try to live as if they had never been. I embrace Rosamund with entire kindness, and I request her to read these lines. I shall be with you to morrow evening.'

'I will obey my brother!' said the heart-struck Countess. 'That name shall not pass these lips! Lord of my life, thy name, thy image, and all the mighty mischief done thee, shall revel here in my wretched heart! The deed is passed. But the punishment is not passed, nor retribution, nor sorrow!—Thou beloved and kind sister,' said she to the Duchess, as she gave her back the letter, 'abandon me not! Do not thou too say, "Let us live as if it never had been." Suffer the sight of my grief. Endure me wretched, as you loved me happy.' The Duchess clasped her to

her breast, and the tenderest words fell from her lips.

'I do believe,' said Lady Clarenstein, laying her hand on her heart, 'that they think me made of marble, and that this heart cannot break as another's would.'

The Duke returned. He came as a Brother and a friend, and his will was obeyed. The Hôtel de Rhonberg opened its gates, and again the song, the laugh, and the gay pomp of life, were admitted. The shadow of happiness returned to supply the place of its reality. The world was deceived; it believed that peace was restored to that noble house; but there was a chamber where grief reigned triumphant, and it smiled in

fierce scorn to see the veil which was cast over it to conceal its ravages.

Thus is my story done. A dark cloud hangs over the palace of greatness. Will the sun ever shine on it again? See, love tears off his faded roses—his face is saddened—his torch is inverted, and its fire quenched! Will the divine face of love ever be re-illumed? Will his immortal fire blaze out afresh? Will tears celestial revive the withered flowers?

END OF PART THE SECOND.

Rosamund.

PART THE THIRD.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

PLUNGED into an abyss of grief,—grief that was heightened and rendered more acute by the bitter feelings of remorse and shame,—the unhappy Clarenstein remained for several succeeding months. During the first period of its fierce dominion, all the faculties of her mind seemed absorbed in the single one of suffering. Overwhelmed and confounded by the hitherto unknown pains which came in all their sad variety

upon her, she was incapable of thought or resolution. A stupid anguish lay at her heart, and yet in the infancy of her woe she suffered in calm despair. As she had no experience of a permanent state of wretchedness, she knew not how to alleviate or lessen the weight of its sad uniformity. She did not form to herself any idea of its duration. She had not yet acquired that foreboding cast of thought, which long continuance of anguish induces on the mind, making it penetrate into the future, to see only a continuance of the same state of misery.

But not for this did she suffer less. The freshness of her mental powers made her exquisitely susceptible of every torment. Her sensibility seemed suddenly to have wakened into action, only to render her more keenly alive to the feel-

ing of pain. Those who, by initiation into the world of woe, have acquired a bluntness of feeling, or know how to raise a fortitude equal to the measure of the adversity which calls for courage, are sustained in the conflict by a feeling of self-possession which preserves their powers from being enfeebled by that dismay and terror, with which the novelty of suffering oppresses the youthful and high-spirited mind.

The compunction of Lady Clarenstein was as strong, as her errors had been excessive. She was not one who could, for a long continuance, brave the censuré of the world, or the displeasure of the virtuous. I shall not pourtray, step by step, the progress of her remorse. I shall pass on to a period of milder sorrow, when the noble spirit, purified by the fire of adversity, begins to feel its

powers, studies its situation, and seeks to render that tolerable which is become inevitable. But how different is that grief which has fallen upon us, in consequence of a misfortune sent by the direct command of heaven, and that of which our own folly has woven the web ! Innocence fortifies the soul : it can smile in the midst of suffering, for its tears are considered as flowing from a natural and legitimate sorrow : the world respects, and friends sympathise with, it. But to brood in silence over an anguish which dares not, for very shame and humiliation, solicit compassion, is a species of misery that can admit of no increase.

The summer was passed at Rhonberg. Again the mournful Clarenstein beheld that beauty which had so enchanted her. The same objects

of delight were around her, the same grandeur which she loved so well, which once, she had fondly imagined would raise the possessor far, far above the reach of human misery. Now first she felt and acknowledged, that it is from peace of mind that nature derives half its loveliness in our eyes. Now first she knew, that grandeur affords no protection against the all-powerful and equalising hand of adversity. Soft, as before, blew the mountain breeze on her face ; fair, as before, lay beneath her eye the plains of Rhonberg. The trees waved their tall branches in graceful pride. The sun, as before, rose behind the blue mountains, and spread his golden glories over the enchanted ground ; but fled was the roseate light of love, which had impregnated the air, and in its stead a saddening hue prevailed at

norning's dawn, at noon-day's brilliant hour, at evening's setting sun !

Her family was around her, happy and powerful as it had ever been—no injury had been done to its peace.

The Duke was kind and attentive; sometimes, even affectionate; but fled was all confidence ! His intercourse was embittered, his heart no more read hers, his tongue pronounced no more words of sweet endearment, such as he well knew how to render touching—no more existed between them than playful war; that gay, high-bred, bewitching union of wit, tenderness and raillery. Now he seemed to have naught of precept or of counsel to give. He had warned her, at the time, of the

danger which she had run, and he left her to recal his prophetic words to mind, and muse on their completion.

The world, as before, flattered and adored her ; but no more, as formerly, did they give her credit for possessing the germ of qualities higher still in value than the charms of her person, and the talents which adorned her. Her character was now ascertained, from glaring facts, to be defective. They threw incense before her vanity with an unsparing hand ; but they did it with an air of confidence that wounded the spirit of Rosamund, whose pride was greater than her vanity, all coquette as she was by nature. As such, they treated her : even the most delicate of their flatteries betrayed, by the smile, the tone, the phrases, in which they were conveyed, that, in

their estimation, she was considered as a capricious, heartless beauty, who, in the use of her power, had stretched the line too far, and had touched near on that of dishonor. And this it was, that gave to her soul many galling feelings of shame : for it had been her boast and pride to revel in the wildest exercise of all the seductive powers of her sex, and enjoy at the same time that honor, which is paid to an uniform discretion.

The desolate Clarenstein knew not where to turn for support. The gay pageant of her days seemed suddenly to have disappeared. Every thing wore in her eyes a faded aspect. Every illusion was broken, and the sad reality of life every where burst on her view. She saw the world as it is, and started at the prospect.

In the midst of so dreary an insufficiency in herself to regain a shadow of former peace, where was she to turn? Whence was the soul to derive its healthful vigor? She contemplated her own character. She descended into the depths of her own soul, and probed the fatal source of all her errors, 'till by degrees, she learnt to estimate, at their just value, all the gaudy trifles which had charmed her youthful fancy. The chain which had bound her to the world, link by link, was broken. The world appeared no more to her a scene, in which she was to play a few splendid triumphs. She had hitherto been wandering in the fields of romance, unconscious of the confined, and often homely and obscure, destiny of woman in society. She had never compared her destiny with that of other women, and her ideas of woman's happiness, if it could not be termed

romantic, had, at least, been as ideal; as unlike sober sad reality, as if she had been immured all her youth in a solitary castle, instead of having spent it in the midst of Courts and Cities.

But was the proud, the idolised Clarenstein, to take the place assigned to her? Was she to learn such a subjugation of the spirit, as was indispensable to reconcile her to that narrow sphere of influence? Was she to learn the homely virtues of submission, patience, acquiescence? Was she, whose desire had been to reign, to grant out to a prostrate world, smiles and words caught from her unclosing lips like gifts from heaven, was she to know that a man existed on earth, who defied her power, smiled at her feeble charms, and had the *power*, without the *will*, to give her happiness? Strange, confounding thought! Happiness! What

was there of happiness, that she did not possess now as before? What was the loss of one heart? What was a look, a voice, a mien, that they should for ever haunt her thus? ‘It is nothing!’ would she sometimes say. ‘Let me but think so, and it is fancy all. His peace is ruined, as he says; and if it were to do again, I would not so rashly act. But not for this fault, though great, should I so much lament, as to lose all joy in life. Oh let me think no more of what is passed . . . let me think no more of him, and all will be well again. I shall be free, happy, and my heart will once more smile! ’

Thus oft did the wretched Clarenstein exclaim, striving against the intolerable anguish, and, with a desperate force, seeking to heave off from her heart the heavy burthen which lay there: but

then would come before her, in all its gracious majesty, the image of Lord Mansfeldt, and, shuddering with terror at her own anguish, she felt the effort vain, sunk before the offended power, and suffered, in passive despair, its workings on her soul !

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

ON his departure from Vienna, the Duke of Rhonberg, sensible that, after the blow given to his peace by the conduct of his sister, retirement must be irksome to them all, insomuch as that confidence and accordance of feeling, from which it derives all its charms, was broken, invited down to his castle a numerous company ; and it was so arranged that, for the three months which he

spent there, Rhonberg was the scene of a varied round of diversions and festivities.

The Duke was magnificent in his tastes, and his disposition inclined him to gaiety and intercourse with the world. In possession of youth, health, and a mind happily tempered to enjoy, without being enervated by, the pleasures of the world, he had hitherto tasted all the animating delights which were to be found in the high sphere in which he moved ; and in the bosom of his family and private friends, every joy which the heart could demand.

But now, in the midst of the rich fêtes that he gave, there was a gloom on his brow, and a thoughtfulness in his eye, which told that all was not well within. On the first day after their

reaching Rhonberg, he said to the Duchess, after a conversation of some length which they had had together on the recent circumstances which had taken place, ‘ All that I have to request of you is, that while we stay here, we may never be without guests. I cannot be alone with Rosamund. The sight of her irritates me. When I look upon her, there is such a war of anger and resentment in my soul against her, that ten thousand bitter words are on my lips. I would not utter them. I would not distress her. I will never reproach, but I cannot forgive, her. The generous, the high-spirited Mansfeldt, bites the dust ! What, was there no man but him to make a woman’s fool of ? Was there no other beside Mansfeldt to be found of whom to make her sport ? ’

‘No dishonor can fall on Lord Mansfeldt, my dear Lord. All the world knows the greatness of his mind ; and that greatness will enable him to regain his peace.’

The Duke sighed. ‘Greatness of mind is no preservative, I fear, against those passions which have the heart for their object. Rather, in proportion as the soul is finely organised, does it become more exquisitely sensible to pain and disorder. Mansfeldt will say nothing. He has the strength of a giant in keeping his feelings to himself. I have seen how the passion tore him ; and every breath that he drew was agony. Women are no judges of what men endure, because they do not hear them evermore complain. Oh ! Hermione, ’tis well that you are here before my eyes, and that there are, as I believe, a few more like

yourself in the world, or I could feel in my soul the desire to curse the fatal power which you have over our happiness. Rosamund, when she is disposed to exult in the mischief which she has done, and reckon up all her ambitious insults, must not forget the chief and prime achievement, which is that of having injured and dishonored the whole sex in the mind of a man, whose indulgence, credulity, and whose romantic honor for the sex, is probably, by her good management and delicate devices, pretty well destroyed. How often have I seen that calm and serene eye, the picture of his soul, lighten with enthusiasm, as he would declare to me that he believed her to possess endowments of nature high and enlarged, that she had the germ of all the virtues, that she was capable of all great and lovely actions; and, in a word, that all her follies

were but the too luxuriant shoots of a soul formed to acquire influence over men ! Alas ! he saw in her the reflection of his own greatness ! He would believe no ill of her. The variety of her character charmed him, for though himself steady and uniform as a rock, yet seeing nature, as he thought, in all these diversities, and surely there was grace and loveliness enough to deceive into that belief, he admired and adored them with a passionate love. She so touched every fibre of his heart, that she was the queen and mistress of every delightful sensation in his breast. Her laughter roused him to gaiety. Her false and glozing eye subdued his soul to softness; and if she spoke of glory, as well she can speak and deceive the heart, he caught a new inspiration from her sweet musical tones, which sung so delicately words of martial fire—Shame, shame, on her deceitful

heart! For she knew well the effect of every word. Have I not seen the haughty smile which lay lurking like a traitor in her eye. That, however, is over; for the whole world would not drag him again to her feet.'

'No,' replied the Duchess, 'force would not drag him there, but—'

'You think that he will return himself of his own free will—No, not a second time—nor should he, if he would, while I have an arm to keep him off,' returned the Duke vehemently.

'Poor Rosamund!' said the Duchess, 'to lose at once such a lover and such a brother! At least, the punishment is equal to the offence.'

‘There is the Prince di Bronti to make up the loss,’ said the Duke contemptuously; ‘he may console her.’

‘My dearest Duke, you make me shudder. There is such a fixed anger in your breast, as I thought could not exist in it.’

‘Because you never roused it.’ ‘God forbid! It would destroy me were I the object of it, and even as it is, it makes me miserable for Rosamund.’ ‘Spare yourself the pain of feeling for her. Her heart is not so delicately strung as yours.’

‘That remains to be proved, my dear Lord.’

‘It is already proved what slight stuff it is made of. Mansfeldt and her brother are paltry sacrifices to make to the humor of a coquette.’

The Duchess was going to reply, when the Duke suddenly placed his hand before her mouth, ‘ I beseech you, no more, lest I forget how much I loved her, and utter words that I shall repent to have said against a sister. I beseech you, urge not my nature farther. I will be, as much as I can, the same to her. But let us not be alone.’

‘ Your wishes are laws, and your commands I am not accustomed to question or dispute. I shall take care to do as you wish. If our hearts ache in the midst of pleasure and the world, it cannot now be helped. But there is one thing I could wish.’

‘ What is that?’

‘ That you will not call Rosamund Lady Clarenstein. The name never passes your lips

that her color does not come and go: and sometimes you lay such an emphasis on the word.'

'Do I? I have not the design to employ any petty vengeance of that sort.'

'I think that she always recals to mind that action of the Count's on his arrival here.'

'Aye, he might well start at the name of Clarenstein. It carries a world of woe in it for him: but since you will have it so, lady of my soul, I will call her so no more. But I tell you again, Lady Clarenstein's heart is cast in a coarser mould than thine, my Duchess. Come here to the window,' continued the Duke, 'look at her there on the terrace below, would any one think that such a figure as that could inclose such a—'

Look how those two boys hang about her, as if already they felt her wondrous graces. Eugene is always in her arms, always lisping out some minion love-phrase or other. By heaven, if they were girls, they should not be about her. I should have a nursery of young coquettes. Hermione, if you ever mean to do me the honor of giving me a daughter, I do beseech you, let her not be a coquette.'

'I cannot answer for that, my dear Lord.'

'Then give me sons.'

'For the coquettes to work upon?'

'By heaven, there is danger every where. I will have those boys strangled.'

‘We will consider of that, Duke. There is no immediate hurry.’

‘A good deed cannot be done too soon.’

‘If the Duke strangle his sons, the Duchess will strangle the Duke.’

‘And the Duchess will lose her pretty head on a scaffold. There will be a fine subject for the German school.’

‘I’ll send up for those urchins,’ cried the Duke.

‘My Lord?’ said the Duchess, with a look of dismay that made the Duke laugh. He went into the antichamber. ‘Tell them to bring Constantine and Eugene to me.’

‘ If that’s your will, lord of my life,’ said the Duchess, taking off her sash, ‘ I shall dispatch you first. Now the knot is slipped. Have you any thing to say?’

‘ Nothing,’ cried the Duke, embracing her, ‘ but that I love you—now draw hard.’

‘ My strength is gone now.’

‘ Why is there magic in those words?’

‘ There is no doing any thing with you,’ said the Duchess, turning away.

‘ I beg your pardon, you may do any thing that you please with me. But if you endeavor to

strangle me, I must make use of the weapons that I have to defend myself.'

' Defend yourself indeed !'

' Come back,' cried the Duke, ' and take off this bow-string.'

' No, on my honor, I will not,' exclaimed the Duchess, going to her children, who came hand-in-hand, and cried, ' Here we are, mamma ?'

' Come here to me,' cried the Duke, ' you little atoms of beauty.'

' No,' exclaimed the Duchess, keeping them back, ' they shall not come. Boys, he wants to strangle you!'

‘ No,’ cried Constantine, rearing himself up with a noble and firm gesture like his father, that the Duchess clasped him to her bosom, ‘ no man shall strangle me.’ “ Me will not be strangled. Me will tell Lord Mansfeldt and Lady Othamund of you, if you do.” *Wrid. Geigone.*

‘ Well, boy, and what then?’

‘ Oh, they will be so angry. Lord Mansfeldt has a sword too.’

‘ Faith, Duchess, these children of yours are rare young thunderbolts. I am actually braved out of my own will with you. Bring yourself and them here. Let me clasp to my bosom something like the possession of heaven, for I believe that you all three came down from thence. Lady of

my soul, you once detested me. Do you love me now? Are you happy?—You proud fellow, with your black head, you must learn to be more humble. You have got all the pride of all the house of Rhonberg in you, I perceive. And as to you, with your blue eyes and your fair hair, you ought to have been a girl. Duchess, look at him, is he not a girl?’

‘ Oh mamma is crying,’ exclaimed Eugene. ‘ Here is a tear on my neck. Oh me, what is the matter?’

‘ Papa said mamma hated him, and I saw her cry then.’

‘ Well, boy,’ said the Duke, in a voice of excessive emotion, ‘ you need not look like lightning at me.’

‘ Oh mamma is laughing now,’ cried Eugene, throwing his arms round her neck.

‘ Duchess,’ said the Duke, in a low voice, ‘ you shall tell me another time whether you are happy or not. This is pantomime, and I will have an answer when you have a word to give me.’ So saying, the Duke left the room, and thus ended the German tragedy.

Lady Clarenstein knew but too well how to interpret the Duke’s chusing to have Rhonberg transformed, as it were, into a public rendezvous that summer ; and wounded to the soul by believing, that to avoid all private intercourse with herself was the prime and chief cause of this change, she felt a sort of pride in falling in with this pleasure, and to conceal from his view, and from that

of all his house, the state in which she was, became her earnest wish. She therefore appeared as before in outward demeanor. She came every day into their circle: was of all the rural fêtes which took place. She cultivated the same talents, partook of the same pleasures, and acted with consummate address the semblance of content. Thus was the Duke the more deceived, and he judged from her behavior that her peace was not materially injured. The name of Lord Mansfeldt was never pronounced in her presence, and from the total silence which was maintained on the subject, it might have seemed to her a dream, if, on her part, there were not too sure and dreadful proofs of its reality.

The Duke received letters from Lord Mansfeldt, but he did not communicate their contents

to his sister; and she doubted not but that she was cast from his memory and heart, like a pernicious weed that must not take root in so noble a soil. She believed that Lord Mansfeldt was cured of his passion for her. One day, however, that she was reading in the saloon, the Duke received a packet of letters, one of which he hastily opened. Opposite to where she sat, there hung a large mirror, which reflected to her view every gesture and feature of the Duke as he stood behind her near a window, reading the letter, and she saw that, by turns, his countenance expressed every varied emotion of disquiet, regret, and pain. At length he ceased to read. He lifted up his eyes, and fixed them on herself. There was reproach, resentment, cold displeasure, almost even to scorn, in that look. It was indeed but momentary, for he hastily folded up the letter,

and went out of the room. Lady Clarenstein burst into tears; and a few moments afterwards, rising from her seat, she saw on the ground the envelope of a letter. Already her conscious heart had told her whence it came, but now, her eye falling on the paper, she saw, in the address, the hand-writing of Lord Mansfeldt.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

BUT Love, the mighty master, can instruct and beautify the dullest sense, and tame the wildest spirit. The soul which love, pure exalted love, has touched with its celestial fire, becomes, as it were, a new creation. Love is the source of true greatness in the mind. It softens the rugged and unsocial passions. It invigorates and exalts. It prepares the heart for the attainment of every

beautiful virtue, and purifies the taste from all vain and empty joys. Love, from the first great source descending, in due gradations pervades the whole creation. It touches by innumerable shades on all the relations of life. It disposes the heart to charity, benevolence, indulgence, and all the offices of kindness. In its progress on the soul it beautifies and enlarges—new-born virtues are ever rising, order every where prevailing, and all proud selfish passions one by one dying in the soul.

But this is the effect of love only on a noble mind, when it can work on a germ of true greatness, where there are no little passions to counteract its power. Such was the effect on the soul of Lady Clarenstein, by the incessant contemplation of the perfections of that being whom she

had cast away. Often, amid such meditations, when her soul glowed with enthusiasm for such exalted virtue enshrined in so noble a form, she forgot how it was to her for ever lost. Then, in a passion of grief, she would break from the transient dream : a torrent of humiliation bore down on her soul ; and prostrate at the feet of the injured Mansfeldt, she in idea lay, owned all the guilt, and received the punishment.

And oh ! how often did this cutting thought pierce like a dagger to her soul—that by such a man she would be soon forgotten, that he could never have wished for an union with her, and that an ignoble passion, which his greatness would quickly crush, was all that she could have had the power to raise in his breast ! Yet bitter as was this idea, the adoration of his virtues in-

spired in her a desire to imitate them ; for a noble mind is not content simply to admire what is great, but will also find strength to be the thing it honors. Thus he became to her a second Deity on earth, and the contemplation of his virtues a second worship. The divine beauty which glowed in him raised in her bosom a responsive flame, which burned with an equal ardor for true glory, and carried her thoughts to the first great source of all perfection. Her imagination thus resting for ever on images of moral beauty and greatness, not to her ideal, since they had been realised in the person of Lord Mansfeldt, produced a noble enthusiasm. Her sensibility found a pure and natural object on which to rest ~~itself~~, and thus love combining ~~itself~~ with the finest qualities of her nature, planted itself there, and flourished, and brought forth in immortal

beauty, adorning at once her mind and person with ten thousand new and touching graces of manner and expression.

Can such love as this decay? Can it ever be contaminated more, by the mixture of base and contemptible passions? Disinterested and noble soul, that could, under so desolating a cloud as that which hung over it, break forth with so sweet a lustre! For no faint hope invigorated her resolutions, that he would ever return to know the thoughts that filled her breast. Thus, in tears and deep remorse, passed the summer at Rhonberg. It was on the last evening of their residence there that the young Countess, oppressed with many recollections, retired from the circle in the saloon to her chamber. She could no longer endure the contrast between the gaiety of that circle and

her own dejection. The Duke had on that day appeared to her unusually cold and indifferent. She had passed him on leaving the saloon, and he had suffered her to retire without noticing the tears which filled her eyes. Her heart was breaking. ‘Alas!’ she cried, ‘he heeds me not! He no longer loves me. He is utterly careless of what becomes of me!’ When in her own apartments, she thought of their removal the next day; she felt an unconquerable dislike to return to Vienna. She thought how irksome would now be to her the Court, the scenes of pleasure there. Then came to her remembrance her former return to that city in company with Lord Mansfeldt, and her tears began to flow. Sick at heart, spiritless and wretched, she drew near the window to breathe the freshness of the air. The sun was setting behind the forest, and

dusky shadows lay over the plain. A light breeze was abroad; it swept over the trees with a rushing sound, and scattered some of the yellow leaves. There was a mingled cast of beauty and desolation in the prospect around her, that impressed her imagination with a feeling that she could not define, of mystery and awe. As thus she gazed on the scene, she heard the gallop of a horse in the park. She looked towards the verge of the forest, and saw a black horse emerge from beneath the trees, and shoot across the plain. The pulses of her heart quickened as she recognised the animal, which was a favorite war-horse of Count Mansfeldt's. Ten thousand images broke at once on the imagination of Lady Clarenstein. How often had she stood at that window to see the Count vault on that horse's back, and course him along the wide plain with that

incomparable strength and grace which were so remarkably united in him. How often had his voice ascended to her from the plain below ! It was the favorite spot in which the Duke and his gentlemen were accustomed to hawk : images of chivalrous grace came crowding fast before her, 'till she almost fancied that she saw it peopled with a thousand gay forms. She thought that she heard the prancing of their horses ; the falconer's cry, the voice of Lord Mansfeldt ascending from the plain. She recollect ed that once attracted by a distant horn, she had come to the window, and had seen a troop of horsemen pouring down the steep of yonder hill, and Lord Mansfeldt far before the rest, urging his steed to reach the plain, where high in air a falcon pursued a dove. He clears the mound. He springs the fence. He plunges into the broad stream, which

glitters in the bright sun. He is in the plain. He advances. His eye is fixed on the birds. Sudden he sees a dearer object: he checks his speed: in vain now falls at his feet the dove, precipitated by the warlike falcon. He leaves far behind the gallant troop. He rides with his head uncovered: he is beneath the castle walls: but the lady of his soul is no longer there. His voice recalls her. He murmurs at the desertion. There is no answer returned. A silken curtain is drawn back. He sees indistinctly a peerless form, a hand whiter than snow, which casts out a cluster of flowers. They are caught as they fall: they are pressed a thousand times to his lips: they are hastily concealed. The horseman retreats, and the sport goes on as before. Oh dream of former joys, oh illusions! The plain is desolate,

the courser is there without his rider. The Enchanter has disappeared.

Lady Clarenstein turned from the window ; she walked up and down her chamber ; she was oppressed with the variety and excess of her sufferings. Restless, and seeking, in change of place, change of anguish, she threw a veil over her head, and went into the gardens, which she knew, at this hour, would be deserted. She heard, as she went out of the castle, the sound of instruments, and the steps of the dancers. She sighed. Suddenly the air changed to that valtz whose loud animating tones seemed now, in mockery of her anguish, to fill the air. She shuddered and quickened her pace. It seemed as if every thing conspired to penetrate her soul with the image of Lord Mansfeldt. His presence seemed to be all around; his power, not to be escaped; his idea,

to pursue her with a cruel and unrelenting assiduity. Scarcely knowing whither her languid steps led her, she found herself suddenly at the entrance of a small lawn surrounded by tall trees, in which stood a pavilion that was called the Hall of Roses, and was considered as consecrated to herself, bearing on one of the columns her name. It was a beautiful circular temple of white marble, surrounded by a colonnade. The inner court was latticed. It was in this pavilion that she had spent with Lord Mansfeldt the last evening of their residence at Rhonberg. On leaving it, he had locked the inner recess of the pavilion with these words, ‘ Let this be sacred to the vows which you have uttered. Let no hand but thine unclose the door. When I am not near thee to adore thee, go in there, and think of Mansfeldt.’ These words had oft been remembered, but her hand never unclosed the door. Now, how-

ever, she took the key from the capital of a column on which he had placed it, unclosed the door, and entered. It was a retreat worthy to be the abode of an adored and happy mistress. At the upper end was a beautiful couch. Moss roses, thickly planted in the outer colonnade, pierced the gold lattice work, and formed a gay tapestry of leaves and flowers evermore playing and fluttering in the breeze. The murmur of a distant fountain was heard in the gardens below. Lady Clarenstein, with a beating heart, seated herself on the couch. On it lay a book which she remembered the Count to have been reading to her. The cushion yet retained the impression which his arm had made upon it. On the head of the couch lay his sword with a golden chain that fastened it round his waist. At sight of this memorial she shuddered. She looked at it; and dared not for very respect displace it. She bent her head over

it, and burning tears sullied the blade. Her lips touched it. When, suddenly recoiling, she cried aloud, and struck her hand on her heart, and exclaimed, ‘No, never—these false lips shall never touch that noble relic which the hand of honor placed there. It stands as a monument of my eternal shame. These tokens tell me that I am a perjured wretch: for can I forget that on this couch my tongue pronounced vows which thou didst think it heaven to hear. Can I forget how that noble soul did strive, as it were, to leave its mansion in that breast, to unite itself to mine? Where are my vows? Where is the lord of my life?’ At these words, a sudden motion of her arm having displaced it, a paper fell from the cushion on which the sword lay. The characters of his hand met her eye. She read these lines—‘Beloved, when your eye next beholds these

tokens, lay thy exquisite hand on my true sword, and swear in the name of honor to love me ever.'

The wretched Clarenstein, as cold and motionless as a statue, gazed on the characters. 'Love thee,' she cried, 'Yes, too certainly I love. The torment is here—in my head—in my heart—in every fibre of my frame.'

In just such an hour was it that the Count had been beside her. So did the setting sun cast its rays into the pavilion, and tinge with brighter red the glowing flowers. Just such a subdued light had it cast on the place where the Count had sat. Her mind became bewildered. She looked 'till she thought that she beheld his smile, his dark eye—that she felt the pressure of his

armi. She started from the seat, and frightened at the excess of her own emotion, she turned from the pavilion, closed the door, and returned to the castle.

Unable to recover herself that evening, she sent to excuse herself to the Duchess, for not appearing at supper; and retired to rest. Sleep, in pity to her sufferings, closed her eyes.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

BUT the young and delicate Rosamund could not sustain such varied and strong emotions without being sensible that her health was injured. In the morning when she arose, she felt unrefreshed, and her languid limbs scarcely enabled her to stand, whilst her women dressed her. A sudden faintness came over her. Helene burst into tears. ‘ My good girl,’ said the Countess calmly, ‘ you must accustom yourself to witness these things,

without being disturbed by them.' Helene, who next to worshipped her mistress, had frequently observed the feverish, restless nights that she passed, and the traces of tears which were often visible in the morning, on her beautiful eyes. Respect alone prevented her from giving expression to the anxiety with which her humble but affectionate heart was filled.

The lovely, unhappy Clarenstein, with a frame so exquisitely delicate, that she seemed unable to contend with difficulties and hardships, did at the same time possess a strength of mind that in some measure counteracted the feminine delicacy of her frame. She had learnt how to suffer, not only without petulant complaining, but, what is harder still, to suffer patiently without receiving sympathy: she, who from the hour of her birth

had been the object of incessant attention and solicitude, and to whom protection, even to indulgence, seemed indispensable.

She left her chamber with a composed demeanor, and crossed the hall leading to the breakfast-room. Her eyes were fixed on the ground, and she did not see that the Duke was walking there, 'till coming up he addressed her. She started. The Duke said 'do you start at seeing me?'

' Oh no ! only I was surprised. I did not expect,—I did not know that you were so near me.'

' Surprised ! you did not use to be surprised at seeing me.'

Lady Clarenstein sighed.

‘ How are you to day ? ready for our journey ?
You look very pale. Are you well ? ’

‘ Yes, quite well. It is only the cold.’

‘ Cold,’ repeated the Duke, ‘ it is not a cold morning. But if you are cold, why don’t you pull this over you ? ’ and the Duke drew her shawl over her bosom.

‘ Thank you,’ she said, and they went on together to the breakfast-room. The Duke, struck with the languid looks of his sister, could do nothing but observe her during breakfast. As he lifted her into the carriage, he gently pressed her arm, and during the way he showed so much

anxiety for her accommodation that she, smiling, faintly said ‘ I do assure you I am not ill. You know I never have any color.’

‘ Pardon me, I know no such thing,’ answered the Duke, arranging some cushions that she might sit more at her ease. ‘ These mountain roads are so rough,’ he said.

Lady Clarenstein said in a trembling voice,
‘ You are very kind.’

Something at that moment smote the Duke’s heart. He suspected that he had not been very kind. The Duke was far from guessing the state of his sister’s mind. The care which she had taken to conceal it, and the succession of company which at his desire had been at Rhonberg, had

prevented him from observing any thing in her manner or appearance, sufficient to create alarm. But now he could not for a moment keep his eye off her. The touching expression of her beautifully-formed features, her dark eyes which with so languid and quiet a motion raised themselves, above all, the faint smile which sometimes hovered on the loveliest mouth that the delicate hand of Nature ever shaped, went to the Duke's heart ; and every moment, some dear remembrance of past confidence and affection came over him. He was sensible that all was changed between them. He was aware that when he was deeply offended, there was a height and coldness in his manner, that rendered it impossible for any one, who was the object of his offence, to be at ease in his presence. It was possible that the

high-spirited and insolent Rosamund might have felt this too keenly.

These reflexions so occupied his mind, that he joined but little in the conversation of his sister and the Duchess. Now and then, with an absent air he gave an assent to what they said, and relapsed into silence, listening to the mournful modulation of her voice; and sometimes, when her face was averted, regarding her with profound attention.

Towards evening, Lady Clarenstein was so fatigued that it was with difficulty she supported herself. She said nothing, however; but as it was dusk, and she thought herself unobserved, she frequently pressed her hand to her head, to ease its aching, and sighed heavily. The Duke leaned

over to the Duchess, and said something in her ear; on which she rose, and gave her seat to him. Then the Duke said to his sister, ‘I wish that you would lean on me . . . you are tired to death.’

‘Not much. Are we near Vienna?’

‘Some miles off yet,’ answered the Duchess. ‘Do, my sweet Rosamund, lean on the Duke. It will relieve you if you are fatigued.’ . . .

The Duke threw his arm around her waist, and said in a low voice, ‘rest on my shoulder, Contessa.’

At that name, so long disused, Lady Rosamund no longer hesitated to do as the Duke

desired. The tears started into her eyes: she would fain conceal them; ‘I shall tire you, I am afraid.’

‘*Tire me!*’ repeated the Duke.

Fatigue, combined with the soothing influence of the Duke’s kindness, which spread like balm over her harassed spirits, contributed to throw her into a gentle slumber. ‘She sleeps,’ whispered the Duke, laying over her head a veil which the Duchess gave him, ‘what can make her so fatigued?’

The Duchess sighed.

‘Is any thing the matter with her?’

‘More than appears, I fear. Her woman said that this morning she had nearly fainted. There is something on her heart.’

‘I think so too. But what can make *her* unhappy?’ said the Duke, in a tone of tenderness that belied his words.

‘Do you ask that, my dear lord?’

‘Is it possible that regret . . . remorse . . . should prey on her peace?’

‘Very possible.’

‘Can so capricious a character feel so deeply? what says she of herself?’

‘ Nothing in confidence to me. She receives my affection with a sweetness as if she had no longer a claim to aught, even ~~to~~^{with} humility.’

‘ Humility,’ repeated the Duke, as if he were shocked at the word. ‘ Humility is not one of the virtues that she had ever cause to learn. They took care not to let her fancy that such a thing existed as humility.’

‘ She sometimes mentioned you to me in a manner that used to affect me greatly.’

‘ How was that?’

‘ Oh it was only a question perhaps, or a slight phrase, but pronounced with so touching a consciousness that things were no longer between

you as they had been. It was perhaps nothing more than an inquiry, “if the Duke would wish any thing to be done this way or that;” or “if I would ask the Duke such and such questions.”

The Duke pressed his lips on his sister’s hand, which lay on his breast. ‘But why?’ said he after a pause, ‘why so much reserve to you?’

‘ You remember your desire that no allusion to what had passed should, for the sake of our peace, be made between us; that the name of Lord Mansfeldt——’

‘ No more, Hermione: no more. Conjure not up the image of Mansfeldt before me, to make me hate once more that false, capricious, inexplicable conduct, which made a wreck of the

noblest heart that ever breathed ! Unhappy girl ! I pity you, but you have embittered my life, and all our happiness. You, who from my boyish days were so beloved . . . of whom I made my boast, my pride. Whom I never enough could please. I thought nothing too rich or rare to please her fancy, or adorn this fatal beauty. Not even thou, Hermione, or my dear children, or Mansfeldt's self, were once dearer.'

The Duke paused. But he had said enough to stab to the soul the wretched Clarenstein. She, albeit he had spoken low, in order not to waken her, had heard the name of Mansfeldt, and the latter part of her brother's speech had directly and deliberately gone to her heart. Her face was veiled, and with a violent effort over herself, she betrayed no sign of emotion. Her

heart almost ceased to beat for very anguish : silent and cold as marble, she lay on the bosom of the Duke, and for an instant wished that she might there breathe out her last, and atone for having “embittered the life” of so dear a brother.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

THE sensibility which the Duke had evinced, during their journey, towards his sister, had been strong ; but it was transient. The next morning she appeared with a renovated face, and he became again convinced that Mansfeldt alone bore the barbed arrow in his breast. This force was but the result of the pain she had endured from the words of the Duke. She felt convinced by them, that he could never be recon-

ciled to her, and that all hope of ever bringing him back to that dear intimacy, which had formerly existed between them, was for ever gone. Being now also obliged to appear in public, she thought it incumbent on her for decency and honor's sake, to wear, as much as possible, the semblance of content, and she fondly hoped that she could live, '*le sourire sur les lèvres, la mort dans le cœur.*'

A few days after her arrival at Vienna, she saw, on her dressing-table, a letter. 'When did this come, Hélène?' said she.

'Madame, c'est le Page du Prince di Bronti qui est venu pendant que Madame est sortie; il me l'a remis pour Madame.'

At that name, Lady Clarenstein felt a pang at her heart. She broke open the seal, and read the letter. It was worthy of the hand which wrote it. Never was there a more eloquent, artful, and passionate declaration, than that which met her eye on the perusal of it. He implored her to forget that even, though but in appearance, he had violated the respect he had for her ; attributed the duel which he had fought with Count Mansfeldt to misconstruction on the part of the latter, and as he had the art of Belial to make the worse appear the better reason, he so couched in humility this part of his letter, that it was difficult to say, whether it were not the intemperate sally of a most vehement passion that had given to his words that shade of disrespect which the Count had thought fit to resent. In a word, to believe him, he was the person

injured and misinterpreted. Then followed expressions of the most unbounded attachment, and the offer of his hand with all the princely appendages to it; and he concluded by conjuring her to signify to him her pleasure, to pronounce on him life or death. Such was the substance of this letter, which, when the Countess had read, she inquired of Helene if the page were waiting; being answered in the affirmative, she took a pen, and wrote as follows:

“The honor your highness has been pleased to offer me of your alliance, I cannot accept. I should be disposed to decline it with those expressions of grateful acknowledgment, which the preference of a man of honor deserves, if I could overlook your highness’ most ungenerously, and most falsely having given to my name a never

to be forgotten insult. If your highness feels any sorrow for this, you can only make it manifest to me, by forbearing again to address me on the subject of your letter, or assail my ear with a declaration of an attachment, which you have been pleased, I must say, so boldly, to acquaint me with. I have the honor to be, &c.

R. CLARENSTEIN."

The Prince was lounging on a sofa in that state of effeminate indolence in which he lived half his life, when nothing animated him, at the moment of Julio's entrance.

Ebbene Julio, che m'apporta ; Vita o morte ?
Che dice la principessa ? come v' accogliete ?
sorrise ella ? La lettera mia, ha ricevuta, con un
celeste bacio forse ? Parla dunque.

‘ La risposta dell’ Illustrissima Contessa e qui Signor.’

‘ Ah divino scritto,’ exclaimed the Prince, seizing the note, ‘ e più dolce che tutte le odore del’ Arabia.’

The Prince was not dismayed at the severity of the contents. He was well aware that the first avowal of his passion would probably meet with no gentler reception, after the circumstance of the duel. He was however instantly seized with one of those fits of spleen and ill humor, which always possessed him when any thing crossed his will. He bit his lips, twisted his handsome eye-brows into ten thousand frightful forms of the expression of never to be forgotten insult. ‘ By my soul,’ cried he, ‘ I do not

know what she means by this insufferable pride ! Would any one imagine, that she meant me to understand nothing by that valtz she did me the honor of dancing with me, in the very teeth of Lord Mansfeldt ?'

The Prince really loved Lady Clarenstein, as much as he could love any thing on earth but himself.

During his illness, in consequence of the wound which he received from the hand of Lord Mansfeldt, he had forbore to address her; though, from the dissolution of ~~his~~^{her} marriage, he had reason to believe that his machinations had all the success which he hoped from them. He wished her resentment against himself to be dissipated by time, and with this design he had

spent the summer in different parts of Germany, and had returned to Vienna only a few days before the Duke of Rhonberg.

There was nothing of which the Prince was not capable, when his passions were violently affected. Hatred of the Count, mortified self-love, and the resolution to vanquish what he termed the whim of a peevish beauty, would inevitably have precipitated her into difficulties most disastrous, if happily the inconstancy of his nature had not in the end relieved her from his persecution. But this was in after-days : and now he swore by all the gods that he would make her ‘ piegar la superba fronte.’ ‘ I imagine, boy,’ he cried, ‘ that you had sense enough to ask a hundred questions of her woman. It imports me

to know where I can see the Countess? does she mean to shine to night? or is it her pleasure to be as cold and as churlish as the moon in a cloudy night?"

'La Signora Helene e troppo discreta.'

'Why dont you make love to her? that's one of your duties, boy.'

'Non è al gusto mio.'

'Taste, child! you are to have no tastes. Carry your figure de zephyr, and all your diminutive conceptions of what the women think irresistible, to the feet of Mademoiselle Helene.'

‘Sarà obbedito il mio Prence. La Signora Ellena sarà l'idol mio, tanto che piace al mio Signore.’

The Prince then sent for his things to dress, and went in a very ill humor to dine at Count Brumaire's.

Lady Clarenstein communicated to Hermione the receipt of the Prince's letter, without making any observation on it. The Duchess simply remarked, that the Prince had a great deal of audacity; and nothing more passed on the subject. In the evening, the Duchess and herself went to the opera. They were late, and soon after their entrance, the Prince di Bronti came into the box, thinking himself authorised to do so, from a cold bow which he had received from

the Duke at Count Brumaire's, where they had dined together. The Duchess received him with a politeness that was any thing but encouraging; and Lady Clarenstein shuddered as she beheld the man who had lifted his hand against Count Mansfeldt. The obeisance, which the Prince made to her, was a master-piece of respect, grace and dejection. There were other men in the box, and as the Duchess and Lady Clarenstein did not address themselves to him, he felt himself a little ill at ease. He stayed however to act before her every shade of suppressed passion that could be acted in so public a place. He did not presume to speak directly to Lady Clarenstein. He only stood behind her chair, as if it were a consolation to be near her, though it were but in the same position as her footman: and now and then he uttered a dis-

jointed phrase in harmonious Italian, a language which he always took the privilege to speak when he was in love. At length the Opera ended, and the Duchess not immediately leaving the box, the Prince drew near and said to the Countess, ‘ Might I implore a moment’s audience to-morrow morning ? ’

‘ Your Highness no doubt has received my letter ? ’

‘ I cannot take that answer.’

‘ It is the only one that I can give your Highness.’

‘ From your own lips alone I will take it. Suffer me to wait on you ? ’

‘ It is impossible. My resolution is unalterable.’

The Prince bit his lips. ‘ There is nothing,’ cried he, ‘ that I would not do to appease, to expiate . . . ?’

‘ Silence, my Lord, is the only expiation.’

‘ What haughtiness ! What severity !’

‘ Your Highness constrains me to use such language.’

The Prince was silent, and followed her as she went to her carriage, and said in a whisper not to be overheard by the gentlemen who conducted her : ‘ I must besiege your doors ’till they are opened to me. I intreat, I implore only to

be heard for five minutes. Refuse me this, and there is nothing of which I am not capable.'

'The Prince does injustice to himself,' replied Lady Clarenstein coolly. 'He could do nothing so unlike a gentleman as—'

'What, Madam?'

'Oblige me to refuse him admission publicly.'

At these words Lady Clarenstein stepped into the carriage, and left him.

'Proud as Lucifer,' exclaimed the Prince, 'but fairer than heaven itself, and well worth the wooing. Do I not know thee, saucy beauty? Unalterable resolutions! nonsense! as if I did

not know of what sort of stuff a woman's unalterable resolutions are made! How many women I have caused to break these irrevocable resolves. Have I not, many a time and oft, been sent into exile to the farthest pole one day, when if I had taken them at their word, they would have followed me there, the next! What a scornful smile she gave me! "The Prince can do nothing unlike a gentleman." Oh no, certainly. But the first thing that he does shall be to teach thee better manners. There is no pleasure on earth so great as that of taming these fierce beauties. Do I not know how infamously she treated Mansfeldt? Making a God of him one day, and treating him like a dog the next. 'Tis like enough that she will do the same by me. By Jupiter, 'tis pretty to see her affecting the lofty airs of an inaccessible propriety. That whim

will last four and twenty hours possibly. Shut your doors, ma Princesse ! I'll see you to-morrow if you are to be found above ground. I'll take you to Florence, my sweet Rosamund ; and there if you chuse, when you have been Princess di Bronti, a year or two, to make the unalterable resolution of never opening your proud lips to speak to the Prince, be it at your pleasure ! Cela me sera bien égal alors ! There is nothing in my opinion so insipid as women who are always in good humor, and always smiling at you, and showing their white teeth, which are the occasion of more smiles, than ever good humor was. Let me have a mistress that makes me hate and detest her forty times a day : there is nothing but a storm can drive away that devil, ennui ; which next to le divin amour, is the greatest plague of my existence.'

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

THE next morning the Prince's beautiful horses and his grooms were seen standing for two hours at the Hotel de Rhonberg. At length he came out himself, vaulted into his seat with the grace of a Mercury, and the countenance of a fiend, and galloped full speed down the street, from which it was conjectured that the unalterable resolution remained still in force. He had however, by dint of persecution, been admitted to

the presence of Lady Clarenstein, owing to the mediation of the Duke, of whom on being denied admission chez la divine Contesse, he had requested an interview, to which the Duke had consented.

The chilling politeness with which he was received, did not deter him from making known to the Duke the object of his solicitation, and after much debate, and much passion on the part of the Prince, the Duke calmly said, ‘I do not conceal from your Highness that you have not my interest with the Countess.’

The Prince was the most miserable man on earth. But the Duke would not perhaps oppose his suit?

‘Lady Clarenstein is entire mistress of herself on this, and all other points.’

‘But your influence, my Lord, is known to be great.’

The Duke sighed, as he thought how ineffectual his influence had been with her.

The Prince lingered. He would not depart without hearing, from her own lips, the decision of his fate. ‘Have I,’ he asked, ‘your permission to see the Countess?’

‘I must repeat, that I have no authority to refuse or permit your Highness any thing.’

Again there was a pause; and the Duke did every thing but bow the Prince out of his

presence. In a passion of despair, he said that he was the most unhappy man on earth to be refused five minutes' interview with the Countess, when it was made under the most humiliating circumstances.

‘ Whilst Lady Clarenstein honors me by remaining under my protection, I cannot suffer her to be compelled to an interview displeasing to her.’

The Prince declared that nothing else could make him desist from his pursuit; that 'till he heard from her own lips the decision of his fate, he could have no force to submit to it; that the happiness of his life depended on it, and that what he requested was a favor which would be granted to the meanest of her suitors.

‘Will your Highness consent to consider an interview as decisive?’

The Prince said that he should consider it as such, and the Duke then consented to request of his sister the favor which he implored.

Accordingly he went to her chamber, and informed her succinctly of the Prince’s desire to see her.

‘I have already given to the Prince his answer,’ she replied. ‘But if it will put an end to further persecution on his part, I will see him.’ Here she paused, sighed heavily, and bent her head to her brother, in acknowledgment of the condescension he showed, in wishing to relieve her from any embarrassment. I shall not detail the

scene which then took place between herself and the Prince. Suffice it to say, that he left her, more enamored and provoked than ever at her impenetrable obstinacy.

Scarcely had he left her, when a servant brought into the room the gazette of the day. She opened it, and the following paragraph met her eye. With feelings better imagined than described, she read,

‘ This day is expected from the Court of * * * General Count Mansfeldt. The arrival of his Excellency has been retarded, by his having been charged to conduct to Vienna the young Princess.’

Lady Clarenstein was alone: she clasped her hands before her face, and remained for many

minutes, absorbed in thought ; when, suddenly raising her head, a smile the most desolate that ever wore the appearance of transport, broke on her lips. She said aloud, ‘ I shall see him : I shall hear him speak. My eyes will behold his gracious person : my ear will hear his voice.’ The transport which agitated the young Countess was but the transient delirium of an intense anguish. It was a mournful proof of the desolation of her heart, of her deep and steady conviction that she had nothing to hope from the return of Lord Mansfeldt. Had still a latent thought sustained her, that he might be influenced by her presence, so as to feel again for her a revival of his passion, she would have been disquieted, restless, balanced between fear and hope—but to behold him as one who had ceased to exist for her, to sigh for a sight of those fea-

tures as one sighs to recal the image of some dear friend who exists not on this earth, was all that the mournful Countess thought or expected. The Duke and Duchess, and herself, were that day to dine with the first Minister. The tone of false spirits, with which Lady Clarenstein was animated, gave a lustre to her eyes, and a rich color to her cheek that had not long been seen there. She entered the saloon where her brother and Hermione were waiting for her. They both looked at her with a sort of wonder; and the Duchess, charmed to see the traces of dejection disappear from her countenance, said affectionately, ‘*Tu es jolie, aujourd’hui, ma bonne amie.*’

‘*Cela te fait-il plaisir, Hermione?*’ she asked.

Now the Duke could not plainly understand the cause of these renovated spirits, but as his eyes surveyed her, he wondered not at the mischief which she had caused. He suspected the color on her cheek to be artificial. He took his cambric handkerchief, and passed it over her face, ~~and~~ she stooped to embrace the Duchess who was seated. If the Duke had reflected for one moment, he would not have done it. ‘It is real,’ he said.

‘Would you have wished it otherwise?’ asked Lady Clarenstein in a voice of emotion.

‘No,’ replied the Duke, endeavoring to conceal, under the mask of gaiety, the idea which had passed in his mind, ‘It is a thousand times better as it is. Nothing can be more beautiful.’

‘ Or less natural, you think, than now to see it on my cheek? I understand you.’

‘ Understand me ! ’ repeated the Duke ; ‘ Yes ; I hope so. You have not of late looked so brilliant, and I rejoice to see it. If you understand me so, you are right. If otherwise, you are unjust.’

The tears started into the eyes of Lady Clarenstein. She laid her hand upon her heart. ‘ There is something here, which makes me suspicious of all kindness. A wounded conscience is soon alarmed, and mistrusts the plainest meanings. I beseech you, be not offended if I did misunderstand yours.’

The Duke was fain to hide at once his vexation and emotion, by pressing his sister's hand to his lips. Nothing more was said, and they departed.

The dinner of the Minister was remarkably gay, and the movement around her sustained the spirits of Lady Clarenstein. There was a numerous company. The Prince di Bronti was there. He had successfully manœuvred to gain the place next to her at table ; and as he knew that there is nothing more disagreeable to women of Lady Clarenstein's disposition than to be pestered with sighs they care not to hear, he exerted all his powers to entertain her, and he was not wholly unsuccessful. The servants were withdrawn, and the party was still at table, when suddenly the sound of horses galloping down the street

roused their attention. This was succeeded by the noise of carriages following at a distance, announcing an arrival in town. The attention which this incident excited, produced a pause in the conversation. Some of the gentlemen went to the window. ‘Who can this be?’ said one of them. ‘They are come from a distance, for the horses are all in a foam.’

‘I fancy,’ said the Minister, ‘that it is General Mansfeldt. He is to come into town to day, and I think that he must pass this way to his Hôtel.’

‘Your Excellency is right. It is General Mansfeldt by the eagle on the crest. There are three carriages.’

‘ By all that’s lucky,’ cried another Cavalier, ‘ the Princess travels with him. Here she comes, close on his chariot wheels! Now, if by a happy chance she do but look up :—they say that she is a perfect Hebe.’ In the expectation of seeing the Princess, all the gentlemen now rose. The Duke was seated opposite to his sister. There was no need now to try the color in her cheek. She was living marble. The Prince fixed his insolent eye on her. A mingled fierceness and jealousy darkened his countenance. The Duke saw his audacious intent to penetrate her thoughts ; he said aloud, ‘ My Lord, have you no curiosity to look at the Princess ? Let us go.’

The Prince could not refuse. He rose and went to the window with the Duke. Lady Clarenstein with a violent effort over herself main-

tained a degree of composure. She listened to the trampling of the horses. Her heart died within her. She saw all the gentlemen bow, and she imagined it to be a salutation returned to Lord Mansfeldt. His carriage passed.

‘Now for it!’ cried several voices at once. ‘Here she is. Four Ladies.—Oh, she will be on the right hand, on this side. That’s lucky.’ Another, and a lower, bow was made. The carriage proceeded. The Gentlemen returned to their seats.

‘Did you see her?’

‘She seemed to have no mind to be seen; she sat so back in the carriage.’

‘Fatigue,’ cried the Prince, ‘o la bella modestia forse.’

‘I saw a great deal of fur and embroidery; and a very white hand in miniature without a glove.’

‘I saw a very pretty smile, and a profusion of fair hair.’

‘Oh, Princesses always smile and talk, as they go through a town. C'est l'étiquette des Princes.’

‘I suppose that Lord Mansfeldt will take her directly to the palace.’

‘I wonder that the Empress let her niece travel with such a fellow as Mansfeldt.’

‘ Oh, la grande âme de Monsieur le Comte, le haut devoir le rendroient impossible de faire l’amour à la petite Princesse.’

‘ Yes: but that would not prevent la petite Princesse from being penetrated with the consummate excellencies du grand Général.’

‘ Oh, certainly not; and perhaps the Empress would not be mortally distressed if she did . . . it is said . . . it is whispered . . . there is a report . . . ?’ A servant presented the minister with a note, which contained a summons from the Emperor to attend him immediately. He therefore communicated this to the company, apologised for his retiring, and left the room.

The audience was short, and the minister returned. No questions are ever asked of a minister, or if they are, they never meet with a direct answer. His Excellency did however so far disclose the secret of the cabinet as to say, that there never was an embassy more productive of service to the state than that which Count Mansfeldt had brought to a conclusion. ‘The talents of that young nobleman are as great in the cabinet, as they are in the field. He has a powerful mind which sees every point of connexion, and combines them with a rapidity and a justness, that baffles the most cautious and artful finesse. He bears down upon his subject with a measured and deliberate force, a luminous intelligence, and an eloquence that is irresistible. The Emperor has overwhelmed him with expressions of favor.’

‘ How does the General look ? ’ asked a lady.

‘ Why, he was dreadfully fatigued, and not having dined, he probably looked worse.’

‘ Worse ! ’ repeated the lady. ‘ My dear minister, what an expression ! ’

‘ I meant that he looked tired, and was become thinner. But perhaps it was the fur cloak in which he was wrapped that produced this effect.’ The minister then fell into a private conversation with the Duke of Rhonberg, who soon after went out, and they saw him no more that night. He spent the evening with Count Mansfeldt.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

To recompense the services which Lord Mansfeldt had, on this and on many other occasions, rendered his country, the sovereign created him Duke of Laudohn: a title which had formerly been in his family, and was forfeited by disaffection in one of its members. The Count was, as has already been observed, a soldier of fortune; his father having at an early period of life dissipated his property, left his son at the age of ten

years without protection, and without the means of supporting the dignity of a nobleman. Now, however, he came into possession of fortunes, attached to the Dukedom, more splendid than one much more desirous of wealth than himself could covet. At the moment of his leaving the royal presence, the Emperor presented him with the patent complete in all its forms, and Count Mansfeldt left the palace, Duke of Laudohn. To the Duke of Rhonberg the minister had communicated this intelligence, which was not to be publicly declared 'till the next day, when there was to be a grand levee at which the new Duke was to kiss hands.

Of these circumstances Lady Clarenstein was informed by Hermione the next morning. The Duke, she said, would of course be at the

levee, and she also informed her that her name was included in the list of those, who were that evening to form the circle of the Empress.

‘The Empress will receive me again then?’ said Lady Clarenstein mournfully; ‘I owe this to my brother, I imagine?’

Hermione could not wholly deny this, but said that the Duke had not directly made any application to the Empress.

‘It is equal,’ she replied. ‘Rhonberg is very good, and it is a disgrace the less. My days of triumph are passed. There was a time when even at the court I was considered and preferred. But it is very just. The Empress is severe, and

I rendered myself amenable to her rigid principles. I could wish to know one thing . . . ?

‘What, my best Rosamund?’

‘If Lord . . . ?’ Lady Rosamund stopped
The name of Mansfeldt never passed her lips.
So she said ‘if the Duke of Laudohn will be
there?’

‘Yes,’ replied the Duchess.

Lady Clarenstein turned pale, and leaned her
head against the shoulder of Hermione, and
faintly said, ‘I could have wished to have seen
him for the first time in any other place . . but
since it is so . . ?’

‘The Duke,’ answered Hermione, ‘is distressed at this circumstance.’

‘Did he deign to think of it?’

‘Indeed he did, and would have otherwise arranged it, if it had been in his power. But the intimation of the Empress was arbitrary and . . .’

‘No, certainly—there was no possibility of doing other than accepting it, in the way in which it was granted. We must then have courage, and meet the evil in all its forms. The innocent only have a claim to consideration. I do not feel that I have a right to be spared any thing . . . it is very just.’

Hermione clasped her sister in her arms, and nothing more was said. Shortly after this conversation, Lady Clarenstein went to her chamber. As she crossed the hall, she felt the wish to express to the Duke her thanks for the interest which he had evinced in her being again received by the Empress. In fact, that lady, offended by the conduct of the Duke's sister, had, the preceding year, caused it to be intimated to her that she dispensed with her attendance upon her at her public drawing-rooms, and her name was omitted in the invitations sent to the Duchess to the private parties at the palace; and, sunk in despair as Lady Clarenstein had been on the departure of Lord Mansfeldt, it had not failed greatly to distress and humiliate her. Feeling now therefore, that it was to the Duke's influence she owed her recal, she desired simply to acknowledge to

him the sense which she entertained of his goodness. She inquired therefore, if he were yet gone to the levee, and being answered in the negative, she entered the library. A large Indian screen, which was stretched across the room, prevented the entrance of any one from being observed by those in it, and the light step of Lady Clarenstein was scarcely heard on the carpet. She went on therefore 'till, on turning the corner of the screen, full in her sight, leaning against the chimney-piece, stood the Duke of Laudohn. The Duke was seated with his back towards her. He was not aware of her presence 'till Lord Mansfeldt called out ' Rhonberg ! ' then he turned his head, and beheld his sister, whose first impulse had been to fly. Her second was the offspring of the most beautiful feeling that, at such a moment, under such circumstances, could arise

in the heart. She turned back her already retreating steps, and with eyes that raised not from the ground their fringed lids, she made to the Count a low obeisance. It was a direct and deliberate homage, which seemed to have arisen from the sudden sight of one who is the object of our habitual, deep and profound reverence. This done, she retired, and the Duke followed her.

Lord Mansfeldt heard her say, in a tone of great disorder, ‘ they told me that you were alone.’

‘ Let me lead you to your chamber?’

‘ There is no need——I am able to go.’

The Duke closed the door, and returned. Not a word was spoken. Lord Mansfeldt walked to the window. He was greatly agitated. At length the Duke said, ‘she had no idea that you were here?’

Lord Mansfeldt could not at that moment speak. The beautiful vision, the abruptness of its entrance, its affecting homage to himself, bereft him of all his calmness. Thus taken by surprise, the effect of eight months’ discipline of his soul was in one short moment destroyed. He came up to the Duke, and said in a voice of inexpressible emotion, ‘Lady Clarenstein is well, Rhonberg?’

The Duke hesitated. ‘Why do you ask?’

‘ I thought that she looked somewhat paler than when . . . ?’

‘ I think that she did not expect to see you: when suddenly affected, she is very apt to turn pale.’

Lord Mansfeldt sighed profoundly.

‘ I am glad however that she has seen you.’

‘ Why?’

‘ Because you will see her again this evening in a place that will not permit of any emotion, and she is not so strong as she was.’

‘ Where is that?’

‘At the palace. The Empress consents to receive her again.’

‘Receive her?’ repeated Lord Mansfeldt; ‘what do you mean?’

‘Since your departure, Rosamund has not appeared at the drawing-room.’

‘From what cause?’

‘The displeasure of the Empress.’

‘On account of . . . of the . . .’

‘Yes,’ said the Duke, understanding Lord Mansfeldt’s meaning. ‘It has given her a great deal of pain.’

Lord Mansfeldt walked up and down the room. ‘Pain,’ repeated he with emphasis, as if he expressed at that moment what he felt himself.

‘She is high-spirited; and is not used to neglect.’

‘Neglect,’ repeated Lord Mansfeldt.

‘I am desirous that the evening were over. Your presence must inevitably contribute to her distress.’

‘I will not be there.’

‘You cannot avoid it, Mansfeldt.’

‘The universe shall not make me do aught that can distress her . . . I cannot stand it. I cannot be so unmanly a wretch as to be present and witness any embarrassment of hers.’

‘You are a generous noble-hearted fellow, Mansfeldt, but things must take their course, . . . and as she has seen you . . .’

‘Seen me?’ cried Lord Mansfeldt in a voice hardly audible. ‘Am I become a thing to terrify and alarm her?’

‘No. But you must think that she has feeling and—’

‘I rouse then in her bosom ten thousand thorns. I humble, I distress her.’

‘ You cannot but think that you must, my noble friend.’

‘ You distract me. She has injured me. She has blasted, utterly ruined me. But sooner than stand cool, and oppressed with honors, to behold her downcast look again, I would exile myself for ever from my country. I must not, will not, have a cold unfeeling world cast but the lightest look or word of disdain on her. The injury is mine! what is all this resentment? not receive her! not grant her the same courtesies given to all the women her companions?’

‘ The Empress is *severe*?’

‘ ‘ *Severe!* say heartless . . . she used me ill indeed; she has broken down my haughty soul. But whom else has she injured or offended?’

‘The honor and strict propriety of her sex’s manners. So the Empress thinks.’

‘By heaven!’ cried Lord Mansfeldt with a sudden start of vehemence, ‘I believe her to be as full of honor, of principles, as chaste, as delicate . . .’

‘I think so too, but her conduct was so public, so glaring.’

‘Aye, blessed be God, it was public . . . declared . . . there was no concealment—no artifice—no mean and paltry subterfuges to gloss over a broken reputation, to preserve appearances. Call her, if you will, perfidious, perjured . . . but the tongue of slander cannot cast one

stain upon her . . . not receive her! I cannot endure this!'

' Mansfeldt,' said the Duke emphatically, ' you are the noblest creature that ever breathed . . . that I do verily believe. But I beseech you to recollect yourself. Recal your firmness. The levee is already begun. We must be gone. Whither is fled the satisfaction which you testified to me last night at the honors which rewarded your labors?'

' I had not then beheld her.'

' Suffer your mind to be open to what it is formed to feel and enjoy. You are not insensible to . . .'

‘ I was not ’till I saw her. ’Tis past, ’tis gone, like a dream. The popular applause does not touch me. Greatness comes without a charm. My heart is desolate. If at her feet my dukedom had been laid . . . but I am a heartless pageant . . . ’

‘ Am I then nothing? Is my friendship nothing to you? . . . my friend . . . my brother! ’

Lord Mansfeldt threw himself into the arms of the Duke. They were silent. A servant entered. ‘ My Lord,’ he said, ‘ it is much past the hour.’

‘ Let us go, Mansfeldt,’ cried the Duke, and they left the room. As they were passing to the carriage, the Duke’s two children who were returning from their walk, seeing their father,

ran up to them. Lord Mansfeldt embraced them both, and held Eugene long in his arms, who could never often enough cry out as loud as he was able, ‘ Oh me are so happy. Me are so glad . . . oh now we shall all be so merry again.’

‘ Why, you ungrateful urchin, are you not always merry?’

‘ Oh yes : me is very happy,’ said Eugene sighing, ‘ and so is Constantine, and . . .’

‘ Come, come,’ cried the Duke abruptly : fearing that the whole detail of the happiness of his family was going to be announced to all the lacqueys in waiting. ‘ Get down, you lisping

king of the fairies My dear Lord, put him down . . . we shall be very late.'

' God bless thee, fair boy !' said Lord Mansfeldt, kissing his forehead.

' Oh let me go with you.'

' What, to the levee !' cried the Duke. ' Very likely indeed !'

' Oh me do know the Empress. She gave me and Constantine some almonds. Oh they were so good, so good . . . she took me into her carriage too one day. Me should like to go so much and Constantine.'

‘ Some time or other. Not now. Do set him down, Mansfeldt.’

‘ But you’ll not go away again?’

‘ No, no.’

‘ And do you love me now?’

‘ Yes, Yes;’ cried the Duke impatiently, but his son would not be so answered.

‘ Do you, dear Mansfeldt?’ said he, using a phrase of Lady Clarenstein, that the Count had formerly taught him, and with an accent and a smile so like her’s, that the Count hastily put him down. He seized hold of Constantine’s hand, and dragged him away, saying, ‘ we will go now

to dear Lady Othamund, and tell her we have seen him.'

When the Duke saw his sister on his return from the levee, he affectionately held out his hand to her, and said, 'I will take care that another time you shall not be liable to any such embarrassment.'

'I came,' she replied, 'in the intention of thanking you for . . . for the interest you have shown in my being again received by the Empress. I beg of you now therefore to believe that *I am*, and ever *must be*, penetrated with any action of yours that testifies a regard to my feelings, and now more than ever.' She paused, and the Duke kissed her forehead as she bowed it towards him. 'I beseech you,' she said again in a tremulous

voice, ‘to grant me your support to-night. My heart fails me, and in public at least, I could wish . . .’

‘What?’ said the Duke, excessively moved.

‘That you would not suffer the world to see too clearly that I possess no more that which is indispensable to the honor of every woman of your family. If the head of our house does not support me now, I must sink for ever; and though success is now no longer my care, yet . . .’ here she paused again, and passed her hand across her eyes to disperse the tears.

The Duke was too sensible that all his manner was changed, to combat the truth of what she had uttered. ‘I shall take care,’ he replied,

‘ to convince the world that in my thought no one is authorised, not even the court itself, to do otherwise than pay you their accustomed respect. Have you any other wish that I can answer?’

‘ None that I can utter.’

‘ I beg of you to consider me in every thing as attached to your interest. In *private*, as well as in *public*: on all occasions, and under *every* circumstance.’

Lady Clarenstein bowed her head. A silence of some moments ensued.

The Duke then said, ‘ I am to present you. The Empress told me that she wished it to be so. She desired me to bring you to her. I tell you

this, as you might naturally imagine Hermione more likely to perform such a point of etiquette. I do not know the Empress's intention in this, but . . .'

'It was probably to make me understand that only under your influence she extends favor to me, and this I am well inclined to acknowledge with gratitude.'

'I shall therefore,' said the Duke, 'dine at home, that I may go with you, and the Duchess at the same time. I might otherwise make you wait.'

'I am greatly indebted to you. You are very good,' replied Lady Clarenstein, and she kissed

the Duke's hand, who, in great emotion, drew it away ; saying—

‘ Pray, do not do this to me . . . you distress me . . . you owe me nothing . . I cannot bear to receive from you such lowly marks of gratitude and respect.’

‘ These are now all I dare offer you,’ said Lady Clarenstein, ‘ though not what I wish to give.’

The Duke twice embraced his sister, and hastily went out of the room.

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